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A
TREATISE
ON
LOWNESS OF SPIRITS,
AND THE
DISEASE OF MELANCHOLY.

ALSO,
A NUMBER OF
SHORT SERMONS,
ON
VARIOUS AND IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;
CHIEFLY EXTRACTED FROM THE BEST AUTHORS:
WITH
Scripture References
TO
PROPHECIES, MIRACLES, PARABLES, PRAYERS, &c.

BY JOHN BEAUMONT.

LIKEWISE,
HIS EXPERIENCE AND TRAVELS;
INCLUDING
HIS CONVERSION TO GOD,
HIS CALL TO THE MINISTRY,
AND
HIS LABOURS, AS AN ITINERANT PREACHER,
FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS.
TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
SEVERAL MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

London :

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NOSTER-ROW, AND OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

1808.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Treatise on Lowness of Spirits, and the Disease of Melancholy, was published, from the Author's being frequently attacked with the complaint himself, and from his often seeing others, who are at times much distressed in the same way, many of whom do not understand the real nature of their own case. Should any thing here said, tend to the relief or cure of such persons, it would certainly by him be esteemed a very high gratification.

The subjects of the Sermons are various and important, and well calcu-

lated to shew the different parts of a Christian's duty, in all necessary points; which, if properly attended to, will not fail to serve as a sort of directory in all the relative stations in life.

The Observations on Preaching, &c. are worthy the perusal of such as are entering on the Ministry; they shew the great importance of the work, and the most effectual methods to be used to effect it.

The Life, including his Experience and Travels, is written with no other view, but to shew the goodness of God to a poor sinner; how he has owned and succeeded his feeble efforts on various occasions; and likewise, to shew forth the Lord's dealings with him from his earliest days to the present time.

The Miscellanies will be thought entertaining and instructive, especially those on Family Government, together with the

short sketches of a few Scripture Characters, and also the Wise Sayings of the Ancient Fathers; all of which will be found well worthy of perusal.

JUNE 4, 1808.

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A
TREATISE
ON
LOWNESS OF SPIRITS,
AND THE
Disease of Melancholy,
ARISING FROM
BODILY DISTEMPERS;
BY WHICH MANY PERSONS
HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO A STATE OF
WEAK NERVES:
WITH
SOME SALUTARY AND SUITABLE ADVICE.

PARTLY ORIGINAL, AND PARTLY EXTRACTED.

BY JOHN BEAUMONT.

PREFACE.

LONG experience has sufficiently proved, that they who have chosen God for their portion, must expect but little happiness in this world; being both unreasonable, and a contradiction, to expect heaven upon earth, or to look for a settled duration, where all things rush round us in perpetual vicissitude.

What those persons may find who have the world at will, I know not; but it is certain, that believers in general, through the perplexities of this troublesome world, cannot but greatly wish to be “*where the weary are for ever at rest.*” Those saints, who have already finished their course, may well rejoice, having got safe to their Father’s house through so many threatened difficulties.

Amongst the many hindrances to true peace of mind is a nervous state of body, which frequently occasions a melancholy frame of mind, particularly in those whose natural dispositions are dull and phlegmatic. Various causes have been assigned why so many persons now a-days become so nervous, as—the too liberal use of tea, sedentary employments, hard study, hot climates, too much sleep, want of exercise, or the living too low, or too much on slops, and taking but little of solid food. But, in my opinion, nothing injures the system more than anxiety of mind, or excessive grief; nor is it of any great consequence what it is occasioned

by, since it operates much in the same way, whether about religion, or about temporal concerns.

Great anxiety of mind has certainly ruined many a good constitution ; for whenever it meets with gloomy dispositions, it frequently preys upon them exceedingly, and, as persons of this description have seldom any great flow of animal spirits, they are liable to be attacked with a deep melancholy, which directly tends to injure the blood and juices of the body, leaving the mind an easy prey to all the powers of darkness, which Satan will not fail to take advantage of.

Persons naturally inclined to this sort of hypochondria are greatly to be pitied ; for, although some of this cast may be deservedly ranked amongst the best dispositions, yet at particular times, and under certain impressions, they are both very unhappy, and very troublesome. And as a clear description of their state may be of great use, with suitable directions both how to recover themselves, and also how others should treat them ; to such as these, at least, this Treatise must be acceptable. And that it may be instrumental in relieving and comforting some distressed, desponding, cast-down Christians, is the desire and earnest prayer of

Their affectionate friend,

J. BEAUMONT.

A
TREATISE

ON

LOWNESS OF SPIRITS,

AND THE

DISEASE OF MELANCHOLY.

Lowness of Spirits.

1. **N**ERVOUS disorders imitate almost every disease, and are seldom alike in two different persons, or even in the same person at different times. They are continually changing shape, and upon every fresh attack, the patient thinks he feels symptoms which he never experienced before. Nor do they only affect the body; the mind likewise suffers, and is often thereby rendered extremely weak and peevish. Lowness of spirits, timorousness, melancholy, and fickleness of temper, generally attend nervous disorders, which induce many to believe that they are diseases of the mind; but this change of temper is rather a consequence than the cause of the complaint.

2. The most common symptoms are, weakness, flatulence, palpitations, watchfulness, drowsiness after eating, timidity, flashes of heat and cold, numbness, cramps, giddiness, pains, hiccups, anxiety, dry cough, with a difficulty of breathing.

3. One symptom may be described, as making its attacks by violent paroxysms, which are usually preceded by portentous indications like the brooding of a furious storm. It pervades the whole nervous system, writhing the heart with inexpressible anguish, and exciting the most dreadful suggestions of horror and despair!

4. These disorders usually attend a studious life. Want of exercise enervates and subjects the body to all those diseases which depend upon too great a delicacy and sensibility of the moving fibre: usually men of genius are more liable to disorders of the nerves than others. Genius often throws the nerves into convulsions; and great attention naturally numbs their faculties.

5. Nervous disorders are generally attended with palpitations of the heart, fluttering and trembling of the limbs, and a shortness of breath, even with the least exercise. Hence such persons are affected with joy or grief without any real cause. Flying pains in the head also attend this disorder—often violent, but not lasting; sleepless nights, with wandering imaginations. When this disorder gets to a high pitch, the symptoms increase in violence, and each assumes the name of a distinct disorder.

6. Nervous disorders both weaken the sight, the memory, and affect the imagination, by which the mind is exposed to transient impressions of whimsical ideas, more than in a state of health. To the same tendency may be ascribed the constant habit of dreaming, which may sometimes be owing to the state of the stomach and bowels. Dull head-achs, sleepiness and melancholy, these are peculiar symptoms of nervous disorders, which generally arise from want of spirit and motion in the nervous fluid; and if permitted to gather strength by indulgence or long continuance, they become more terrible. As age and intemperance will give them strength, so sobriety and temperance will lay the foundation for a permanent cure. Many have recourse to spiritous liquors; but this only gives temporary relief, and is sure to increase the disorder.

7. Nervous persons are generally dull and inactive, subject to muse without thinking, and disregard every thing: the appetite is sometimes bad, the stomach weak and windy, and the breathing difficult: lowness of spirits, dimness of sight, vain suspicions, melancholy imaginations, a disgust of every thing, a love of laziness, and a drowsy inactivity: these are peculiar symptoms of nervous complaints.

8. A feeble state of the nerves is generally accompanied with an occasional lowness of spirits; therefore the patient should guard against every cause of debility, and engage in active pursuits, to secure the constitution from the further progress of the disease. Every thing that tends to relax or weaken the body, disposes it to nervous diseases; as indolence, self-indulgence, too much tea, or other watery, warm liquors; frequent bleeding, purging, vomiting, &c. Whatever hurts digestion, or prevents the proper assimilation of the food, has this effect; as long fasting, excessive drinking, windy, crude, or unwholesome food, or an unfavourable posture of the body. An early harbinger of nervous affections, is a shortness of sight, and dulness of hearing, which is frequently attended with a fallacious perception of noise.

9. As nervous diseases are now more common in Europe than in former times, they are chiefly attributed to excessive indulgence, which is too common in these times of refinement and luxury. The farther we depart from simplicity and temperance in diet, and the more we sacrifice wholesome exercise to inactive domestic amusements, the more it will diminish the vigour of the constitution.

10. The loss of a husband, a favourite child, or some other disappointment in life, frequently occasions nervous debility; as, intense study not only preys upon the spirits, but prevents the person from taking proper exercise; by which the digestion is impaired, the nourishment prevented, the solids relaxed, and the whole mass of humours vitiated; hence, few studious persons are entirely free from nervous disorders. In short, grief, disappointment, or whatever weakens the body, or distresses the mind, occasion nervous disorders; as unwholesome air, want of sleep, great fatigue, disagreeable apprehensions, anxiety, vexation, &c. &c.

11. This complaint often begins with an absurdity of behaviour, inactivity, dislike to motion, costiveness, oppression from wind, frequent sighing, great dejection, inward sinking, a load at the stomach, palpitation of the heart, incoherent discourse, ridiculous notions,

the mind fixing upon one object, &c. &c., and is often preceded by the following symptoms; as windy distempers of the stomach and intestines, the appetite and digestion usually bad, yet sometimes craving with quick digestion; the food often turns sour on the stomach, attended with vomiting of clear water, tough phlegm, &c.; great pains are often felt in the bowels, attended with a rumbling noise; the body is sometimes loose, but more commonly bound, which occasions the retention of wind, with great uneasiness.

12. As the disorder increases, it produces headaches, cramps, and fixed pains in various parts of the body; the eyes are often clouded, painful and dry, but sometimes run copiously: in short, the whole animal functions are impaired. The mind in this disorder becomes so irritable, as to be disturbed on the most trivial occasions, and is hurried into the most perverse commotions, inquietudes, terror, dulness, anger, diffidence, &c. Wild imaginations and extravagant fancies are also common to this disease, owing to the failure of the memory and the judgment.

13. In this disorder, the urine is sometimes small in quantity; at other times copious and clear. There is also a tightness of the breast, with a difficulty of breathing; violent palpitations of the heart, sudden flashes of heat in various parts of the body. At other times a sense of cold, as if water was poured on them; flying pains in the arms, limbs, back and belly, resembling those occasioned by the gravel; the pulse variable, sometimes slow, at other times quick, yawning, the hickup, frequent sighing, and a sense of suffocation, as from a lump in the throat; alternate fits of crying and convulsive laughter; the sleep is unsound, and seldom refreshing, and is frequently attended with horrid dreams.

14. It is observable, that nervous diseases imitate all kinds of distempers so exactly, that physicians are at a loss to distinguish it from an essential disease of any part; but that one peculiar symptom of it is, a despair of ever recovering. And as the most common symptom of this disease is a constant dread of death, of course it renders those who labour under it, peevish,

fickle, and impatient, apt to run from one doctor to another. This is the reason why they so seldom reap any benefit from medicine, as they have not sufficient resolution to persist in any one course till it has time to produce its proper effect. Those who seriously wish to be cured, must patiently persevere in the use of proper remedies; for it is of no use to begin a medicine, and give over before it can have time to act upon the system.

15. Persons afflicted with this disorder ought never to fast long; their food should be solid and nourishing, but easy of digestion. All excesses should be carefully avoided; and remember, all hot meats are hurtful. They ought never to eat more at a time than they can digest; but if they feel weak and faint between meals, they may eat a bit of bread, and drink a glass of wine: all heavy suppers are to be avoided. Wine taken to excess enfeebles the body, and impairs the faculties of the mind; but in moderation, it strengthens the stomach, and promotes digestion.

16. Exercise in nervous disorders, is in some cases superior to medicines. Riding on horseback is very good, as it gives motion to the body without fatigue. Walking may perhaps agree better with some. Let every one use that kind of exercise which agrees best with his constitution. A cool, dry air is very proper, as it invigorates the whole body. Hot air enervates, especially when it becomes so by great fires, great crowds, or small apartments. If the body, stomach, or bowels, be cold or weak, guard against cold by wearing a thin flannel waistcoat next the skin; this will both keep up perspiration, and defend the body in sudden changes from warm to cold weather. Soft flannel worn next the skin, cannot be too strongly recommended to those who labour under any affection of the lungs, or weakness of the bowels. The same expedient will be found serviceable both in rheumatic, scorbutic, dropsical, hypochondriac, and melancholy complaints.

17. Too much sleep weakens the nerves, renders the temper peevish, and predisposes to apoplexy and palsy; it likewise creates lethargic and indolent dis-

positions, disqualifies for action, and blunts the edge both of intellectual and corporal functions. Hence, lying too long in bed cannot fail to relax the solids; so, to rise early; and to take exercise before breakfast, must be of singular use in this disease: and as nothing hurts the nervous system, or weakens the digestive powers more, than anger, fear, grief, or anxiety; all these should be avoided. A light, dry and warm air is best for weak and diseased lungs; and a dry, cold, or temperate air is fittest for relaxed and weak habits.

18. Exercise is indispensably requisite to preserve regularity in the wheels of motion, and to fit them for the due performance of their usual offices. Exercise is like a main spring to the machinery, as it promotes digestion, prepares and distributes the blood through all the channels of circulation; throws off the imperfect and offensive parts of the fluids, braces the nerves, yea, it gives a firm tone to the solids, and carries an even flow of spirits throughout the whole system. After a full meal, and when the stomach is quite empty, much exercise is injurious. Exercise relieves the head, abates rheumatic pains, and keeps open the bowels, helps evacuations, and has a tendency to prevent the gout: and as it increases circulation and secretion in the legs and feet, it cannot fail to promote general health: it also hinders the formation and assimilation of those morbid particles which exist in a concremented state, in a fixed or settled gout.

19 Damp air, wet clothes, drinking cold liquors when the body is very hot, or warm liquors when it is cold, are very hurtful: all sudden transitions from one extreme to another, are equally conducive to the same end, although they may not immediately be observed. Heavy suppers, much reading, hard study, or any other considerable exertion of the mind near the hour of going to bed, all tend to prevent sound sleep, and to occasion dreams. To eat things very hot spoils the teeth, makes them ach, weakens the eyes, ruins the stomach, and does abundance of mischief.

20. Pure cold water acts as a tonic internally in the stomach, as well as externally on the body; it passes off gently by the different excretions; it dilutes the

saline, and corrects the billious parts of the blood. Bad water is inimical to health; but snow water, and water that freezes readily into ice, are found to be the purest of all. Rain water is next to it, and then river water, which runs with a high current. Spring water is more objectionable; but, because it can be had in a more pure state, it is more commonly used. The purest water is the lightest, which has neither taste, colour nor smell, which easily lathers with soap, and which does not bubble, nor form a sediment when vinegar or spirit of salamoniac is put into it. The best way of purifying water is by distillation; and the most easy is by boiling. Filtration, exposure to the open air, and allowing it due time to settle, are all conducive to its purification.

*How Trouble of Mind usually arises from Melancholy,
and Bodily Distempers.*

1. **MELANCHOLY** has so great a hand in the fears and troubles of the mind, that very few live in great trouble and fear for any length of time, but melancholy becomes more or less seated in the constitution; although they feel nothing apparently in the body, but all in the mind.

2. Some under a dull phlegmatic melancholy, or cholerick distempers, or diseases of the body, or, when under a violent diseased appetite, may transgress more against their knowledge, than otherwise they would do; for when the spirits are flat, the thoughts confused, the reason weak, the passion strong, and the faculties indisposed, so that the actions are but improperly human or moral, it is no wonder if such persons, not only perceive their sin, but think both their sin and danger to be tenfold greater than it is.

3. Where this is the case, usually the party is fearful, almost of every thing; a word, or even a sudden

thought will disquiet them. Sometimes they are sad, and scarcely know why: all their comforts are gone at once. Perhaps nearly as soon as you have done comforting them, although they seemed well satisfied, yet their trouble returns in a few hours or days; at any rate, as soon as the dark and troubled spirits return to their former force: they are still addicted to misery and solitariness, and thoughts will so crowd into their minds, that they cannot possibly lay them aside and get the better of them.

4. If it goes yet still farther, they become frequently assaulted with temptations to blaspheme, to doubt the truth of scripture, or even whether there be a heaven or a hell; and frequently they are tempted to speak some blasphemous words against God or Christ; and this with such importunity that they can hardly forbear; and at times, they are also tempted to make themselves away: but when it goes so far, they are near losing their reason, or what is called insanity.



Remedies against Trouble of Mind and Melancholy.

1. **E**XPECT not that rational and spiritual remedies should suffice in this case; for you might as well expect comfortable words, or a good sermon, to cure a falling sickness, palsy, or broken head, as for this remedy to be a sufficient cure to your melancholy fears. For this is as real a bodily disease as the other; only, because it works on the spirits and fancy, on which words of advice do always work, therefore such words of scripture and reason may somewhat resist it, and also may palliate or allay some of the effects of it at the present: but as soon as time has worn off the force and effects of these reasons, the distemper will frequently return; for the humour hath the advantage, both of continual presence, and of a more necessary, natural, and sensible way of working; as,

if a man be in a lethargy, you may awake him as long as you are calling on him aloud; but as soon as you cease, he is asleep again. Such is the case of the melancholy in their sorrows; for it is as natural for melancholy to cause fears and disquietude of mind, as for phlegm in a lethargy to cause sleep. Do not therefore blame your books, friends, instructors; no, nor even your soul, if these troubles be not cured by words; but labour to discern truly how much of your trouble comes this way, and then fix it in your mind, in all your inquiries, reading, and hearing, that it is the other part of your trouble which is truly rational, and not this part which is from melancholy, which these means were ordained to remove, although God may extraordinarily bless them to both; only remember, that constant importunate prayer is a special remedy for the curing of such diseases.

2. When you have found out how much of your disquietude proceeds from melancholy, acquit your soul from that part of it; still remembering, in all your self-judgings, examinations, and reflections on your heart, that it is not directly to be charged with those sorrows that come from your spleen, save only remotely, as all other diseases are the fruits of sin, viz. as a lethargic dullness is the deserved fruit of all sin; but he that charges it immediately on his soul, wrongs it; as the only lasting and effectual cure must be made on the body.

3. If you want these fears removed, apply yourselves to the proper cure of melancholy, both avoiding all passionate sorrow, fear and anger, as much as you can, and all occasions of discontent and grief; and also avoid much solitariness, and be frequently in cheerful company; not doing as foolish sinners do, to drink away melancholy, and keep company with sensual, vain, wicked persons, that will draw you deeper into distress, and so make your wound deeper, instead of healing it: this method will multiply your troubles when you are forced to look back upon your sinful lost time: but do you keep company with the more cheerful sort of the godly. There is no mirth like

the mirth of believers, which faith fetches from the blood of Christ, and from the promises of the gospel, the experience of past mercies, and from the pleasing apprehensions of everlasting blessedness.

4. In order to get rid of these troubles, converse with men of the strongest faith, that have this heavenly mirth in possession, and can speak experimentally of the joys of the Holy Ghost; and these will be a great help towards reviving your spirits, and changing your melancholy habit, so far as without a physician it may be expected. Yet sometimes it may not be amiss to confer with some that are in your own case, that you may see that your state is not singular; for melancholy people in such distresses are ready to think, that never any were in the case they are in; or at least, never any that were truly godly. To hear of those who fear God, and of the most upright lives, to have the very same complaints as you have, it may give you some hopes that it is not so bad with you as you before imagined. However, be sure you avoid solitariness as much as you possibly can.

5. You should also take heed of too deep fixed musing thoughts; for though study and meditation may be useful, yet excess herein should be cautiously avoided, by any person who is addicted to melancholy; at least, those duties should be attended to very sparingly, till you are better able to bear them; otherwise you may be utterly disabled from attending to them at all. Therefore, by all means shake and rouse yourselves out of such musings, and suddenly turn your thoughts to something else.

6. Be sure to avoid idleness and want of employment, which, as it is a life not pleasing to God, so also it is a means which gives opportunity for melancholy thoughts to be working, and becomes one of the chiefest seasons of Satan's temptations. Therefore, never let the devil find you unemployed; but see that you go cheerfully about the work of your calling, and follow it with diligence; and that time which you can redeem for spiritual exercises, let it be chiefly spent in thanksgiving, praise, and heavenly conference.

7. But if your disquietude arises from outward crosses, which is not uncommon, then trouble for sin immediately follows; and Oh, how often have we seen St. Paul's words verified: *The sorrow of the world worketh death!* How many, even of good people, through crosses with children or friends, through losses in trade, or being wronged in their estates, or else through perplexities arising from some imprudent step or other, occasioning that trouble of mind which has brought on some mortal disease, and ended in a fixed melancholy; which has led some persons to lose their reason, and filled others with such fears and doubts, which has troubled them ever after. We usually bear what God lays on us, better than what we bring on ourselves. Crosses are not great, so much from the bulk of the matter, as from the mind of the sufferer: else, how would so many good men have *rejoiced in the greatest tribulations, and been exceeding glad.* Wrongs, losses, reproaches, and all worldly troubles, are without us; and unless we wilfully open them the door, they cannot touch our hearts: our joy or grief is in no man's power but our own.

8. What an awful consideration it is, that men fearing God should so highly value this world, that when he touches, or takes away only a part of what they possess, that their spirits should sink so low! That they who have taken God for their portion and their all, and have entirely resigned themselves to Christ's disposal, whose very business in this world is to resist the devil, mortify the flesh, and overcome the world. Therefore God's business is, to wean them from it; but it is strange indeed that it should be so high in their estimation, and sit so close to their hearts, that they cannot bear the loss of it without such discontent, disquietude and distraction of mind; yea, although they have Christ still, and a promise, that *all shall work together for their good*, and not only so, but for that one thing taken, they have an hundred mercies yet remaining. How awful, that even believers should have so much unbelief; and that their faith should often be to seek, when they should use it, and live by it! Yea, and that God should seem so little, as not

to satisfy men, unless they have the world with him; and that the world should seem so amiable, when God has made it so contemptible! Truly, this shews the work of mortification to be very imperfect in professors in general. If christians bestowed as much time and pains in mortifying the flesh, as they do about controversies, external duties, formalities, and self-tormenting fears, O what excellent christians would they be, and how would most of their fears and disquietudes be removed! Alas, if we are so unwilling to part with outward comforts now, upon the call of providence, how should we forsake all for Christ? Or what shall we do at death, when all must be parted with? Then value Christ more, and the world less; and hold all you possess in it so loosely, that it may not be grievous to you when called to leave it.

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On Deep Melancholy.

WHEN melancholy is carried to its height, it frequently ends in madness; therefore, to prevent, or to cure it if contracted, is one design of this treatise. It is not more natural for men in a fever, to thirst and rave, than for melancholy persons, when the disorder is at the height, to incline to make themselves away; for the disease will let them feel nothing, but what inclines to musing and despair; yea, and even to say nothing, but, I am *forsaken, miserable, and undone!* They are usually so violently tempted of the devil, that if they pass over a bridge, he frequently urges them to leap into the water. If they see a knife, he tempts them to destroy themselves; and they feel, as if some thing was importunately moving or impelling them, saying, *Do it, do it now;* and in this way, giving them no rest; insomuch, that many of them contrive secretly, how they may accomplish their end.

Though the cure of these unhappy people belongs

as much to other person's case, as to their own; yet so far as they can use their reason, they must be warned,

1. To abhor all these suggestions, and give them no room in their minds; no, not for a moment.

2. Avoid all occasions of sin, and not to be near any knife or razor, river, or any instrument which the devil would have them use, for the execution of their vile purpose.

3. They should by all means open their case to others; tell them all they feel and fear, which may greatly help to preserve them.

4. Be willing to use the means, both physical and spiritual, which tends to cure the disease. If there be any old rooted cause in the mind, that was antecedent to the melancholy, it must be very carefully looked to in the cure.

5. Mortify all turbulent passions, and give not way to *Bedlam* fury, to overcome your reason. Go to Christ, and beg for a meek and quiet spirit; and this will greatly ease your troubled mind. Passionate women, that are easily troubled and hardly quieted, have great need to bend their mind towards such a cure as may restore their mind to its proper exercise.

6. Take heed not to run into any heinous sin, which will so disquiet conscience, as to lay you under the temptation of making yourselves away. Sins against conscience give many no rest, till they have brought themselves to Judas's, or to Ahithophel's end.

7. Keep a believing foresight of what death will bring you to; and then, if you have the use of reason, hell, at least, will make you hold your hands, and be afraid of venturing upon death!

8. See the wonders revealed and bestowed on mankind in Jesus Christ, and embrace the tenor of the covenant of grace. Ignorance of this makes many cry out, *forsaken* and *undone*! But his word shews us, if we confess and forsake, we shall find mercy.

Some further Remarks on Trouble of Mind, and the Disease of Melancholy; with Directions, how such persons should be treated.

THERE is a considerable difference between such as are only under trouble of mind by reason of sin, and such whose bodies are greatly diseased at the same time. A sense of sin, and great sorrow for it, may in some persons not injure their health at all, particularly where the constitution is strong and firm; and the mercy of God may so speedily relieve them, that they suffer no visible decay in their constitution, but are so happy, as to have a sound mind and a sound body too. It is not with relation to those persons, that this Treatise is offered to the Public; but principally, for the sake of such as are under a deep and rooted melancholy: to whom, the following advice will be deemed acceptable.

1. We should consider persons in this state of mind, as under one of the worst distempers to which this miserable life is obnoxious. Melancholy seizes on the brain and spirits, and incapacitates for action; it confounds and disturbs the thoughts, and unavoidably fills the mind with anguish and vexation; of which there is no resemblance in any other distemper, unless it be that of a raging fever. And some think, where this distemper is deeply fixed, having spread its malignant influence over every part, that it is almost as useless to strive against a fever, a pleurisy, the gout, or the stone, which are very grievous to nature, but which even by resolution and courage can scarcely be helped: how gladly would persons of this description get rid of their oppression, if it were possible; but, apparently, all their striving will not drive it away!

Of all the evils and inconveniences of melancholy, the want of sleep, which usually attends it, is one of the worst. It is very reviving to a man that is in pain all the day, to think that he can sleep at night; but when there is no prospect or hope of that, for several nights together, O what strange confusion will seize

upon him ! He is then like one upon a rack, whose anguish will not suffer him to rest ; by this means the faculties of the soul are weakened, and its operations disturbed and clouded, and the poor body languishes and pines away. And this disease is more formidable than any other, because it commonly lasts longer.

It is sometimes a considerable length of time ere this unhappy complaint comes to its height, and usually as long, ere it declines again ; and during its continuance, the mind is full of fear and torment ; yea, of horror and amazement. It is in every respect sad and overwhelming ; it is a state of darkness, which has but few discernible beams of light ; yea, it is even as a land of darkness, on which no sun-beam seems to shine.

This melancholy disease, generally begins with the body, and conveys its venom to the mind ; and if any thing could be found that might keep the blood and spirits in their due temper and motion, it might obstruct its further progress, and in a great measure preserve the mind clear.

As to what medicines are proper to remove it, I leave you to advise with such as are learned in the profession of physic ; but if possible, have recourse to those doctors only who have themselves felt something of the same complaint, as it is impossible fully to understand the nature of it in any other way than by experience. Much wisdom is requisite, to consider both the state of the body, and the mind. We must not despise, either the skilful physician's, or the christian minister's counsel ; for the soul being so nearly connected with the body, the one is to be cured by the word, by prayer, and by spiritual comforts ; while the other must be brought into a proper temperature by physic, by diet and rest, or by harmless and lawful diversions : provided always, that it be so done, as not to evade your troubles, but used as a preparative for further happiness.

2. Look on persons under this dreadful disease of melancholy, with great pity and compassion ; and the more so, by considering, that you are yet in the body, and liable to the same difficulties ; for how brisk,

sanguine, and cheerful soever you now be, yet you may meet with those heavy crosses, those long, painful, and sharp afflictions, which may sink your spirits. Many who are not naturally inclined to melancholy, have been accidentally overwhelmed with it, either by loss of children, or by some sudden and unlooked-for disappointment. Therefore, let every groan from persons so afflicted, deeply affect your hearts; and never look upon them but with compassion and concern, remembering, that *man at his best estate, is altogether vanity!*

Let it wean you from the world, when you see such a disease as this, depriving persons of an ability to manage their affairs, or pursue their employments. Deep melancholy is a complication of violent and sore distresses; being full of miseries, it is itself a sore affliction: any other distemper may trouble us, but this astonishes and amazes us! Look therefore on such persons with great tenderness, as being wounded both in body and mind; as none others for the time, are in so doleful a state. They seem sometimes walking as in fire and brimstone, and as in the pangs of death, and the pains of hell; in great bodily danger, and spiritual calamity. This burden is often heavier than their groaning; their sighs are deep, their hearts are sunk, and their minds are very low: they frequently think on what is sad and frightful, and cannot banish those ideas that are terrible. To see a person wounded, torn, and mangled on the highway, would fill you with compassion: and such as I am speaking of, ought much more to move you; for it seems every moment tearing them to pieces; every moment preys upon their vitals, and they seem continually dying, and yet cannot die.

When you visit such a melancholy person, make this reflection: ‘This friend of mine, a while ago, rejoiced in the love of God as I do; he met with me in holy assemblies, and sung the praises of God with as pleasant a countenance, and as cheerful a heart as myself; and now he is in despair, horror, and mourning; now his visage and language is all bitterness, tears, and woe! Oh how vain a thing is man! How

fearful a thing it is, to fall into the hands of the living God! My poor friend, who is now under a sense of God's displeasure, he is covered with sadness, whilst I rejoice in the blessings of providence. I will therefore by his example learn to improve my own mercies, and to have a great tenderness for such as are very low.' Did you but feel your grief for one hour, you would have great compassion on them; and every one of their tears and sighs would have this language, in which poor Job spoke to his hard-hearted visitors, chap. 21. *Have pity on me, have pity on me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me!*

3. Do not use harsh speeches to your friends, when they are under the disease of melancholy. Persons may fret, perplex, and vex or enrage them, but they will never do them the least good by it. Some indeed may advise you to chide and rebuke them; but in my opinion, such persons cannot have felt this disease themselves; for if they had, they must know that such methods do but serve to pour oil into the flame, and thus chafe and exasperate their wounds, instead of healing them. If you would be serviceable to such persons, you must not vex them with harsh and rigorous discourses; as that will cause them to cherish and conceal their troubles to their greater torment, because they meet with such harsh treatment from those to whom they have begun to explain their case. Our blessed Lord and principal physician, was *meek and lowly*, and would not *break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*. To remove therefore this anguish of mind, put them in mind of God's great kindness. You must endeavour, with such, to use great prudence and gentleness, not thwarting and contradicting them on every occasion: with love you may do them much good; but with anger, none at all. If you be severe in your speeches, they will not be persuaded that it is in kindness, and so not at all regard what you say; nay, your sharp words will pierce as so many daggers to their hearts, and make that inward fever which burns them, to be still more hot and scorching. Of all persons, ministers are most to blame, if, when they find poor forlorn sinners overwhelmed with a

sense of guilt and terror, and are slain by the law, and yet, still set the law more and more home upon them; which is indeed the way to throw them still lower, but not the way to raise them up : it may widen and inflame, but not remove and heal their wounds. To such, the prophet Ezekiel said, chap. xxxiv 4. *The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.* And then the poor soul is more distressed by their harsh language than ever, and is apt to conclude, if ministers speak so severely to them, what will Christ himself do? This is raking the wounds that are already very sore and smarting. Such ministers indeed trouble the waters, but do not bring peace and glad tidings to the weary soul. They would not complain any more than others, if they were not in a violent anguish and perplexity. For as poor Job said, chap. vi. 5. *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? Or loweth the ox over his fodder?* Again, to the sharp expressions of his friends he says, chap. xvi. 3—5. *Miserable comforters are ye all? Shall vain words have an end? I also could speak as you do. If your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you: but I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.* When the soul is already full of sorrow, a little more will make it overflow. When the mind is weakened with many assaults, a small stroke will throw it to the ground : a sore that is continually rubbed and chafed, cannot be cured.

4. You should be so kind to persons under this disease, as to believe what they say ; or however, that these appearances are as they tell you : and above all, do not think they are at ease when they say they are in pain. It is a very foolish plan which some take with these sort of persons, to answer all their complaints and mourns with this, *That it is nothing but fancy; nothing but imagination and whim.* It is a

real *disease*, and a real *misery*, that they are tormented with; nay, were it only *fancy*, yet a diseased *fancy* is as great a disease as any other; it fills them with anguish and trouble. But their disordered *fancy* is the consequence of a greater evil, and one of the sad effects produced by that black humour, that has vitiated all their natural spirits. These afflicted persons can never possibly believe that you pity them, or that you are heartily concerned for them, if you do not credit what they say; and indeed, it frequently happens, that because melancholy persons do not look very ill, or because they have pretty good appetites, and do not lose their flesh, persons that know nothing of the distemper, are apt to think they make themselves worse than they really are: whereas, alas! they are so grieved already, that they need not, neither will they counterfeit any more grief! In all other evils, people take for granted what others say, and accordingly sympathize with them; but in this, men are apt to contradict and blame such as are distressed: but while they do so, they cannot pity them as they ought. This makes their grief intolerable; for when they do declare it, and find it is to no purpose being told, it is but *fancy*, or *vapour*; this carries the appearance of cruelty: and would it not vex you to find, that you could not be believed?

5. Do not urge your friends who are under the disease of melancholy, to do more than they are able; because they are like persons whose bones are broken, and that are in great pain and anguish, and consequently have an incapacity of action. This disease is so full of perplexing, tormenting thoughts, that if it were possible by any innocent means to divert them, you would do them a great kindness. By no means press them to do any thing that requires more intense thinking, or that by fixing their minds, will force them to muse and pore more; by doing of which, they are already very miserable. It puts them into a more anxious ferment, when you are continually fretting them with doing of this or that, to which they seem to have no more power, than a man that hath broke his leg, hath to run.

6. Be not noisy or clamorous with them, but know, that silence and quietness are most favourable to their desolate condition. They are already overwhelmed with sorrow, and grief is a very inactive, sluggish thing, the vehemence of which weakens and blunts the natural spirits, rendering its conceptions very languishing and confused. But perhaps it may be said, must we not urge them to hear the word? I answer, if their distress be continued and unremitting, they are scarcely capable of hearing to profit, because of their temptations and pains, which are very frequent at those times: but if their distemper be not come to that height, you ought to press them to hear; but yet use great prudence, not being too peremptory: but if possible, convince them of their duty, by love and good words; in which case, Jacob's pace with his flocks seems the best and safest way, viz. to drive with fear and caution. Your only method is to win upon them with mild, sweet, and affable carriage.

7. Do not attribute the effects of mere disease to the devil, though the devil may have a hand in causing these diseases; for the envy and rage he is filled with, prompts him to disturb the health and peace of men; and by God's permission, no doubt he brings a great many sicknesses upon them. In the case of Job, we know he filled him all over with tormenting sores, which brought him into great melancholy and perplexities, with spiritual terror and amazement. But yet, it is not proper to attribute every thing of this sort to the devil, when there are some unavoidable expressions of sorrow which are purely natural, and which we cannot help, no more than the sick can forbear to groan and sigh.

Many will say to such, why do you muse and pore so much upon your complaint, and thus gratify the devil? Whereas, it is the very nature of the disease to cause such fixed musings, and they might as well say, why are you diseased? Why will you not be well? Their so musing, proceeds from a violent pressure of spirits, which they are not able to remove. Some may think, that melancholy persons are pleased with their distemper; but I should think, no more than

man that lies on thorns and briers, or as one thrown into a fiery furnace. It is vastly painful for them to be in this condition, and they cannot be supposed so far to hate themselves, as to be fond of pain.

The devil is indeed very busy at work, during the darkness of a soul in this state; he throws his fiery darts to amaze us more, when we are compassed with the terrors of a dismal night; then he is bold and undaunted in his assaults, and injects suddenly and maliciously a thousand monstrous and abominable thoughts of God, and which at the same time seem to be the notions of our minds, and do most terribly grieve and trouble us: and alas! we too often comply with his designs, when thus under great unbelief; and at these times especially, often think God, and ourselves, as the devil would have us.

8. Do not much wonder at any thing such persons may say, or do. What will not people do that are in despair? What will they not say, that think themselves lost for ever! What strange extravagant actions do you see those do, that are under the power of fear! And none are so much so, as these poor people are; being afraid of God, of hell, and of their own sorrows. You need not much wonder at them, when you know that even so great a man as Job, cursed the day of his birth, and talked of God with so much freedom and boldness, that the Lord himself said, *he darkened counsel by words without knowledge*. Do not think it strange if they very much complain; for their grief causes them to speak: the tongue usually speaks of the aching tooth. Their soul is sore vexed, and yet they get no good by complaining. They often say with David, Psalm vi. 6. *I am weary with my groaning; all the night I make my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears*. Yet they cannot forbear still more to groan and weep, till their very eyes are consumed with grief.

9. Let no carriage of theirs provoke you to passion: let no sharp words of theirs make you talk sharply. Sick persons are generally peevish; and it will be a very great weakness in you, not to bear with them,

since this long and sore disease has deprived them of their former temper. We find in scripture several instances of men that uttered woeful complaints, that have said, *Their hope was perished—that the wrath of God lay heavy upon them—that against them his terrors were set in array—that their prayers were shut out—that their iniquities were gone over their heads—that they were as spectacles of reproach, yea, the scorn and wonder of men.* Do not therefore wonder at any thing they say, under such great trouble of mind.

10. Do not mention any formidable things to them, nor tell, in their hearing, any sad stories; because they do already meditate terror; and every thing they hear of, that is terrible, increases their distress. Their troubled imagination readily fixes on any mournful subject, by which means it multiplies its own sorrows. These sad things cause violent agitations, and throws them into great disorders. In many cases they seem very ingenious in heightening every doleful thing; and to argue thus, If it be so dreadful to be so cruelly used, so tormented and enslaved, how dreadful then is my condition, that have God against me, and am likely to be in hell for ever! Studiously avoid all discourse of what is grievous to them; and yet you must not be too merry before them, for then they think you slight their miseries, and have no pity for them. A mixture of affableness and gravity will suit their condition the best: and, if I may advise, I would desire parents not to place those children to any employment that requires much study, as that may engage them to so much thinking, as to overwhelm them with uneasy thoughts.

11. Do not think it needless to talk with them, nor seem as if you thought their troubles to be long; because it is the length of them that often amazes; especially when after one week or month, without sleep or hope, still the next to be as painful and terrible as the former was; this has sometimes pushed persons on to put a period to their present miseries with their lives, in hopes that their distresses would have an end.

As this disease of itself rarely kills any one, strive to revive such, by telling them, that God can bring deliverance in a moment; that he has often done so; yea, that he can quickly cure the disease, and shew them his reconciled countenance, although it has been hid from them for a long season.—Tell them, in a little time their groans and sighs shall be turned into praises, and that God will make them glad according to the days wherein he hath afflicted them, and the years wherein they have seen evil. Though they are like the burning bush, *yet they shall not be consumed*; and that there shall be more sweetness in the deliverance, than there was bitterness in the cross. Pain and trouble indeed makes time seem to go slowly—an hour seems a day, and a day as a week: but if you can give them hope of deliverance, they will be sensibly refreshed, and be enabled to pray, read, or hear, which they could not do to profit while in despair.

12. Tell them of others who have been in anguish, under such terrible distempers, and yet have been delivered. It is difficult to persuade them that any one has felt what they feel; hence, they generally think they are more miserable than Cain or Judas, or even the worst of sinners: and it might be well to acquaint them with several instances of God's gracious dealings with others, after being for many months or years afflicted in the same way. There is in the Book of Martyrs an instance of a Mr. Glover, who was worn and consumed with inward trouble for the space of five years, that he neither could eat nor sleep with any pleasure, being so much perplexed in his mind, as if he had been in the deepest hell; yet at last, after many sharp temptations, and strong buffetings of Satan, he was freed from all trouble and distress, and became like one already in heaven, leading a life altogether celestial. It is likewise said of a Mrs. Drake, that she was so apt to be discouraged, that when she went to hear a strange minister, they used to inform him what sort of hearer he had, lest any thing might be said that might overwhelm her with grief.

13. Tell them not to give themselves up to these distressing thoughts, which will be like so many vul-

tures to prey upon their very vitals ; but to give themselves to God continually, in full expectation that he will speedily come to their deliverance ; and to remember for their comfort, that no one ever yet came to Christ by faith and prayer, that ever were sent empty away : only come by faith ; as on *that* depends all our success for deliverance in the needy time. Examine minutely, whether there be any sin indulged, or any beloved idol cherished, as these will hinder the blessing from being imparted : as such, examine and try yourselves, as artificers do their silver ; and if any thing be discovered, which is contrary to the will of God, put it away with all possible speed, without which no deliverance can reasonably be expected.

14. Pray earnestly for them, yea, weep for them in secret places ; and then let your fervent souls be poured out in strong cries and tears. This seems the more necessary, because they are not able, in a composed lively manner, to recommend their own case to God : therefore urge the greatness of their miseries, as a powerful motive to your supplications ; for none but God can help them. Remember, if our assistance were as a host of armed soldiers ; if our friends were the princes and governors of the earth ; if our possessions were as large as the east and west ; if our meat were as manna from heaven ; if our apparel were as costly as the ephod of Aaron ; yea, and if every day was as glorious as the day of Christ's resurrection ; yet if our minds were overwhelmed with the justice and judgments of God, so as not to believe he both could and would help us, all these things would not yield us any help or consolation at all. You must wrestle with God for them ; and though your eyes be even weary with looking upwards, yet continue still to wait and pray, for it shall not be in vain. Thus you will perform your duty, and do them a great kindness, though perhaps they may be ready to say, " Take not the name of God in vain, by praying for a reprobate."

15. Do not only pray for them yourselves, but get other serious christians to pray for them likewise. When many good people join in their requests together, the cry is more acceptable and prevalent. When

those mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles joined in prayer to remember Peter in chains, he was soon after that miraculously delivered, and in the very time of their prayers. All believers have, through Christ, a great interest in heaven, and the Father is willing to grant what they beg, in the name of his dear Son.

It might also be added, you have need to pray for yourselves, that God may give you strength to bear so heavy a cross, in the affliction of your friends. These doleful complaints and groans, with their long and severe trials, are enough to sink you too, if God does not give proportionable strength. You have need to beg strong faith and great patience, that you may not be unhinged with your passionate or hasty speeches.

Lastly: Put them in mind of the free sovereign grace of God in Christ Jesus—that he is *merciful* and *gracious*, and that his thoughts of mercy and love are as far above ours, as the *heavens are above the earth*. Teach them, as much as possible, to look up to God through the great Mediator, for grace and strength, and not so much to pore on their own souls, where there is so much darkness and unbelief. Seek to divest them from puzzling themselves too much with God's secret and unknown decrees; and strive to help them to believe in Christ, which is both their duty and privilege. You must also shew them what great sinners God has pardoned, and how he has been merciful in forgiving their offences, finding motives to help them from their own miseries, as well as from the gracious and merciful nature of God.

The bad Effects which Sadness and Melancholy has upon others.

1. **W**HAT a lamentable hindrance your melancholy frame of mind is to the conversion and salvation of

others ! Your complaining and sad countenances, both affrights men from the service of God, and, as it were, calls to them to keep off, and fly from him that you find so grievous. You gratify Satan, the enemy of souls, of Christ, and holiness, and become his instruments, though against your will, to fright men from the way of life. By this sort of gloom Satan keeps poor souls from entertaining Christ and truth, by making them believe that the servants of Christ are a company of distempered melancholy souls, and that godliness is the way to make men run mad ; and that he that sets his heart on heaven, must never look more for a merry hour, or a comfortable life on earth.

2. And will you confirm this slander of the devil and his instruments ? Will you entice men to believe him ? Will you make yourselves such pictures of unhappiness, and wear such a vizor of calamity and misery, as shall frighten all that look on you and observe you, and discourage them from the way which they see accompanied with so much sorrow ? As you hang up dead crows in your fields to frighten the rest from the corn ; and as murderers are hung in irons to terrify all that see them from the same crime ; or as the heads of traitors are set up to the same end, as proclaiming to all passengers, *thus must you be used, if you will do as they* : Just so would Satan fill you with terrors, and overwhelm you with grief, and distract you with causeless doubts and fears, that you may appear to the world as a miserable sort of people ; and then all that look on you will be afraid of godliness, and think they see it, as it were, written in your foreheads, *such drooping pitiful creatures must all be, that will lead so precise and heavenly a life.*

3. Do you think your carnal neighbours and acquaintance will not be deterred from a holy life, when they see that since you turned to it, you do nothing but complain, and droop and mourn, as if you were worse than you were before ? And was it not enough that you hindered their salvation *before*, when you were in your ignorance and sin, by your wicked examples and encouragements, but must you hinder it still by your dejected discouraging countenances and conversa-

tions? Yea, your later excessive troubles may do *more* to hinder their conversion than what your persuasions and examples did before. And can you find in your hearts to lay such a stumbling-block as this in the way of your miserable acquaintance, to keep them from salvation? Will it not grieve to think, that you should have so great a hand in men's damnation, even since you are restored to God's favour yourselves? I know, by your sorrows and complaints, that their perdition is no small matter in your eyes: Oh! take heed, therefore, of that which may procure it.

4. The use that Satan would have you make of these very words of advice is, to go away and be more dejected, and say, *What a wretch am I? even unfit to live, that by my griefs are not only miserable myself, but also hinder the salvation of others*: And thus he would draw thee to grieve over thy griefs again; and because thou hast exceeded in thy sorrows, to be still more *excessive*, and so to add one sin to another; so that *grief* is all that he can allow thee; and one *grief* shall be made the reason of another, that thou mayest run thus in a round of misery, and always be *grieving*, and go no farther: Whereas, thou shouldst so *grieve* for such *grief* as may call thee off, and stay thy *grieving*; and thy *repenting* should be the cure and forsaking of thy sin, and not the renewal of it.

5. But, on the other hand, if thou shouldst live such a heavenly joyful life, that the glory of thy hopes might appear in thy countenance and conversation, how many might hereby be drawn to Christ, and caused to think well of the ways of God? Did the godly but exceed the rest of the world, in *holy* joy and *cheerfulness* of mind, as much as they exceed them in happiness, and in the *causes* of true joy, what an honour would it be to Christ and holiness, and what an attractive to win the ignorant to embrace the motions of salvation? How easily would they let go their sinful pleasures, their gluttony and drunkenness, and filthiness and gaming, if they did but see this in the carriage of believers, and that they were soon like to change them for much greater joys? But men will judge of religion by the persons who profess it; hence

that shall seem to them the best religion, that hath the best and happiest professors ; and those seem to them the happiest and best amongst them, that have the greatest comforts, and that conquer best the troubles of the mind. You can expect no other, but that ignorant people that know not the nature of medicines themselves, should judge of them by their success, and think that he followeth the best advice, who is the most healthful, and of longest life. And so will the ignorant judge of the holy doctrines and commands of God, viz. by the lives of those that seem to follow them.

6. Do you therefore behave yourselves in the Church of God, as those that remember, that they live in the presence of a world of men, whose happiness or misery hath much dependance on your lives. If you were *debating* the case with a sensual wretch, would you not *tell him*, that holiness is a state of greater pleasure than sin is? Let him *see*, then, as well as *hear*, of the confidence and comforts of true believers. Were Christians *exemplary* in their lives, how excellent would religion appear. Were we but such as the doctrines of Christianity requireth us to be, even the blind malicious world would be forced to admire the attainments of the saints. Though they might hate him then, yet they would admire them.

Lastly. Were we such as *Stephen*, who was full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and could steadfastly look up to heaven, and see there the glory of the living God, and Jesus standing at his right hand, till we were raised to his holiness in defence of the truth, and his quiet submission to the greatest sufferings, the world would then not be able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which we speak, but the faces of believers would sometimes appear, to the terror of their persecutors, as the faces of angels.

When does Sorrow for Sin become excessive ?

JUDGE not of your state by what you now feel ; you may, by the terrors of the Lord, be in anguish and distress, yea, in the suburbs of hell, and yet never go there ; God may shew you his displeasure, and yet, after a moment's sorrow, you may find him to be your gracious and everlasting friend.

2. It is certainly an evil to be guarded against, being over-much troubled even for sin itself, though this advice does not concern the greatest part of mankind ; for the most are secure, and say, *What have I done ?* They are daring where they ought to fear, and rejoice where they ought to mourn.

3. Our sorrow for sin is excessive, when it hinders our regular proceeding in the true judgment of things ; excessive sorrow raises a mist before our eyes, which obscures our reason and weakens our faculties, by which we do not see things as they really are, but as things appear in the dark.

4. Our sorrow for sin becomes excessive, when it drives us away from God and the means of grace ; the very sight of our wounds should make us hasten to the great Physician for speedy relief. When we have, therefore, thoroughly beheld our sin, the next thing should be to go to God to forgive it ; yea, to the Saviour, our Advocate, to plead our cause, and for the Holy Spirit to renew us in righteousness and true holiness ; and to throw ourselves at his feet, whom we have provoked, in the submissive language of the poor Prodigal, saying, *Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy Son.*

5. Our sorrow for sin is excessive, when it indisposes us for duty ; for if it be attended with great pain and trouble, it will be apt to do so, especially when it makes us altogether omit our duty, and thus damp our affections, which are the wings of the soul, leading us to mind nothing but what is sad and grievous.

6. Our sorrow for sin becomes excessive, when it

swells to such a height, that it covers us with its imperious waves, and thus destroys all the grounds of comfort. It is also excessive, when it makes us give over praying, reading, or hearing, or to relinquish any other duty; when it unstrings our harps, dulls our praises, and makes us unfit for our calling.

7. Our sorrow for sin is excessive, when it puts us upon any indirect means for relief, or when we put that trust in men that should be placed in God; when we expect that care from them which he alone can give; when we seek it in vain company, in recreations, or in any of the things of this world: But if our sense of God's displeasure against sin be very great, we shall soon know that all these things are of no value.

8. Our sorrow for sin becomes excessive, when we give up ourselves to these distresses, rather than to the great Physician of souls; for however sincerity may be a necessary grace, both to lead us to know ourselves, and to urge us to apply to the remedy, yet we never can obtain a cure by poring upon our complaint, however sincere and humble we may be; for nothing but Christ can cure the disease of sin. Then be sure to come to Christ; come as you are, and come now, and above all, come by faith, as without this it is impossible to enjoy God's favour, and to please him here, or to obtain his kingdom hereafter.

Encouragement to Persons in great Distress.

1. **C**ALL to mind that such dreadful terrors as you have, or may have had, are not to be understood as certain evidences of God's rejecting those that are afflicted; for although you may so conclude against yourselves, yet your present peace which God, in great mercy, hath given you, is enough to tell you, that you were mistaken when you thought so.

2. It may be, that true converted persons may be

brought to that pass, as to deny all the evidences of grace which they formerly enjoyed, and may condemn themselves for hypocrites, when at the same time these evidences appear to by-standers, and shine through the black cloud of their terror.

3. It may farther be observed, that the sad speeches such persons utter, and the desperate conclusions that some such make, are little else than the discourses of those that are distracted; nor will God rigidly press them upon us, as sins of that nature which we would take them to be; God, in mercy, considers our distress, and will more gently pass by such extravagances, than we can readily imagine.

4. Let the amiable, lovely, and compassionate nature of God be deeply impressed upon your minds, and think often, and sincerely meditate, that *God is love*—that he delights not in the darkness of a sinner, and that he is willing to save, both just now and to the uttermost.

5. Make much of the probability, or even the possibility of salvation, when the assurance of faith is wanting. It is a great stay to the mind, even to be able to nourish hope in this case; however, such must hope against hope, till the dark cloud disappears. Be assured, if God sincerely incline your heart to accept of Christ as your righteousness, he will undoubtedly fulfil his promise of peace and pardon to you.

6. Do not think you want faith, because you have not assurance; faith is such a belief of the proffer of salvation by Christ in the gospel, as makes us willing to accept it upon God's terms.

7. Listen not to severe and malignant suggestions of Satan, against the mercifulness and goodness of God; if any such thoughts come into your minds, cast them out immediately, and raise your minds to a detestation of them.

8. Be content and thankful for that measure of peace which God has given you; and patiently wait for more in his ordinances, and in holy walking.

9. Live watchfully, but lament your daily failings, and so constantly make peace with God; apply daily to the blood of sprinkling. Expect there may be still

some cause of complaint against yourselves, but consider God's merciful promise to pardon, and that for human infirmities he will not be severe.

Directions to such as are already delivered.

1. **Y**OU have not been in the furnace in vain, but to humble and prove you, and to do you good in the end. Oh ! how good is God ! Good in himself, good in his creatures, but especially good to Israel ! You have had abundant experience of it. He hath upheld you when falling, and raised you up when you were bowed down, and hath *put off your sackcloth, and girded you with gladness, that your soul may sing praises unto him and not be silent.* It becomes you to make a public acknowledgment of your thankfulness to God, that, as deliverance hath been granted at the request of many, so by many who have been concerned for you, thanks may be given to the Lord on your behalf.

2. You had not known so well either your own vanity, or the vanity of the creature, and of all human helps, nor the marvellous loving kindness of the Lord in stepping betwixt the bridge and the water, had you not learned these things by being in the school of affliction ; and I hope he has restored you, that you may be instrumental for the glory of his name in turning many to righteousness.

3. Some of the Lord's most eminent servants have been prepared for great usefulness by manifold temptations ; Christ was tempted that he might succour others. The Lord, no doubt, hath brought you out of the depths of distress, that you may be the more skilful pilot to lead others through the waves and billows which they are afraid will swallow them up. Therefore, as St. Paul recommends, 1 Tim. iv. 12—*Be you an example to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, sound*

speech, holy converse, fervent love, and spiritual-mindedness.

4. Rightly improve spiritual gifts, both in professing and publishing the truth, and then the unspotted purity of your life will be a speaking rule to others, and so adorn both your person and profession, that it will appear you have been with Jesus, and that the life of Christ doth shine forth in you, and that you may be long a burning and shining light in the world, and at last be abundantly recompensed with the reward promised to the wise and faithful.

Ends to be answered by spiritual Distress.

1. **G**OD certainly intends it for the good of the universe, as he does nothing in vain; and when any part suffers, it is for the good of the whole, though perhaps we cannot discern how it is so, till his hand has finished his own work.

2. That others may be convinced by their very senses what a dreadful God he is, and how terrible a thing it is to sin! *When the lion roars who will not fear?* When men see those that were once as pleasant as themselves shedding tears, and crying out in the bitterness of their souls, that they are undone and miserable; their sad looks and their doleful experience bear witness to the Being, the severity, and the justice of God.

3. God does it to keep us from carnal security all our lives, Psalm ix. 23—*Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men.* When our sin has fallen upon us like a giant, surely the remembrance of that horror, pain, and smart will keep us, so that we dare not sleep in sin, nor be unwatchful any more.

4. To convince us of his own all-sufficiency, and the

nothingness of ourselves and all other creatures. He lets us fall into trouble, to shew us how small our strength is; and that if we would have our goings sure, we must depend on him alone. In our prosperity we think this or that creature, or person, will yield us relief; but in spiritual troubles God shews us, that *all men*, even our best friends, *vanity*; even those from whom we expected the greatest help.

5. To discover more clearly to us the corruption and defilement of our nature. In a calm the waters are clear, but in a storm the mire and dirt appears. In prosperity and health we think we have good hearts, but in adversity our corruptions shew themselves. Oh, what unbelief, what impatience and murmuring; yea, what unbecoming thoughts of God, such as we never had before.

6. That from our own experience Christ may be ever precious to us. When we are at ease, and whole, we too seldom think of him; but our pain and smart, our guilt and fears, the sight of our present danger and of approaching wrath, causes us to run to the Physician, and to beg his help when we are sinking; yea, it will make us stretch out hands, and say, *Master, save us, we perish*.

7. That we may put an high value on the Scriptures, may search and look into them with more earnestness and frequency, to see if there be any promises reviving therein; yea, any place in them that may afford hope and comfort to souls so miserable and so guilty as we are.

8. That we may admire the free grace of Christ, and the condescending care of Providence over us; that when our wounds were deep, he poured in wine and oil; when we were inwardly bleeding, and no friend on earth could help us, that he did not suffer us to bleed to death; yea, and whatever gifts, knowledge, opportunities, or other advantages we have, for usefulness, or even zeal in doing good, we ought to say at all times, *By the grace of God I am what I am*. 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Duties of those that are delivered.

1. **LET** us value the world very little, looking upon its most admired glories, as poor, contemptible, empty things ; for indeed so they are. The world by its cares, may easily disquiet us, and throw us down, but it cannot, with all its charms, raise us up again.

2. If we should be tempted to distrust, we should say, I will not entertain any more hard thoughts of God, whom I have found to be so faithful. If tempted to impatience, we must answer and say, I will not fret nor murmur any more, since he has remembered me in my low estate.

3. Let our escape from such long and sore afflictions quicken us to duty ; let our prayers be more fervent, our meditations of him be more sweet, and our thoughts of him be more constant and abiding ; yea, let us take care of all formality and unaffectedness in all our attendance upon God ; let us beware of inward and spiritual decays, and stifle and resist the first abatements and declensions of our love to God and man.

4. Our deliverance from long and sore trials should teach us to walk humbly with God. We have seen him in the terribleness of his Majesty, and such a sight cannot but make us know that we are unclean. What have we then wherein to pride ourselves ? God has laid us low, to shew us what was in our hearts ; and alas ! we saw nothing there but what was very bad.

5. We should be careful of a relapse, avoiding all those things which may bring upon us those bodily diseases from which we are delivered ; so we ought also to be equally as careful to prevent every thing that might bring on indisposition and terror on our souls, when we are newly come out of the furnace. Let us for ever be very cautious to avoid every thing that has the appearance of the least shew of sin.

6. After being delivered, it is our duty to be publicly thankful. It is for the glory of our healer, to speak of the miserable wounds that once pained us, and

of that kind hand that saved us when we were brought very low. Yea, it is for the glory of our Pilot, to tell of the rocks and of the sands, the many dangers and threatening calamities from which we have been mercifully saved.

7. The fears we have had of God's wrath should teach us, not inordinately to fear any of those evils that are of a lower nature. Others that have been all their days in ease and quiet, that have had no trouble for a long time together, may be afraid of temporal evils; but for us, who have been a long time afraid of God himself, how slight a thing should the wrath of man appear! When we have been under his displeasure that can kill the soul, what little cause have we to fear them that can only kill the body? Others may be afraid of a small distress, of a little rough weather, but it does not become us to fear, who have been in so many several storms for so many months together. When we have been afraid of hell, there is nothing upon earth that looks with an aspect so formidable; and, if God has delivered us from the greatest dangers, we ought to believe that he will save us from the lesser troubles of life. Our experience of so many terrible things should fortify our minds against all future afflictions.

An old experienced Christian.

1. **I** HAVE been under deep melancholy, and many temptations and buffetings of Satan, and many have passed by me, as the *Levite* did the wounded man, in the way to *Jericho*, and have not only withdrawn from me, but censured me also. I hope I shall love and pardon all those who, in an hour of temptation, withdrew from me; nay, those who added affliction to my affliction.

2. It would be shameful in me to complain of any

unkindness from my friends, when Christ hath been so kind to me ; he helped me, succoured, and stood by me, when all forsook me ; I looked on my right hand and on my left, and there was none that cared for my soul ; even then did the Lord appear a present help, else the great waters of unbelief and despair had overwhelmed me ; for I have had greater conflicts with Satan, and greater shakings of spirit, than I had at my first conversion.

3. I have been ready to give up all for lost ; yet all hath been in order to my clearer manifestations of everlasting love ; Christ hath carried me through several graves, several chambers of darkness, and fields of temptation, yet all in order to my light and triumph, and greater discoveries of his power, wisdom, faithfulness, and love to me. I have exceedingly put Christ to it, I think as much as any ; I would not believe, unless I might put my fingers in his wounds, viz. unless I had such and such clear manifestations and sealings given of him. Oh, this unbelieving proud temper and spirit of mine, it hath cost me very dear ; though Christ hath wonderfully indulged me, I have put him to take strange courses with me ; nay, to throw me with Jonah into the belly of the whale, and of hell itself, that he might further convince me of my disobedience and unbelief, and of his mighty and glorious power in preserving, and delivering me out of the gulf of temptations.

4. He hath shewed me many miracles of mercy and grace, too big for me to express, and heaven only is fit sufficiently to declare those wonderful dealings of his. If ever any were a pattern of rich grace, I am ; others have not grieved, wounded, or tempted Christ as I have done, and therefore were never cast into those hells, scorched in those fires, scourged with those rods, or exercised with those temptations that I have been exercised with. Sure I am, I should have been in hell ere now, if I had only had my desert ; but God hath stretched out his arm of power and love, and fetched me up out of the lowest pit, where I was sunk, and displayed the banners of his love over me, and opened his heart, and even shewed me his blood.

That thus he should deal with me, the very worst piece of old Adam, nay, a piece of hell, angels and men may stand amazed at, so great and so unexpected were the manifestations of his love.

5. But what shall I say, is not Christ an infinite person? It is impossible for any other to contain his love; such strange love to such an unworthy creature! What I write and speak respecting the greatness of this love, I cannot fully comprehend—were I fully to know it, mortality would be swallowed up of life. Ah! but I am not yet out of gun-shot—I see a field of enemies before me—a devil full of policy and malice, a desperate wicked heart, and wicked world, in which there is a vast deal of evil, yea, a hell of wickedness—all these I have to grapple with, each of them armed with thousands of temptations: I must fight and overcome too, else I am undone for ever.

6. It is certainly a glorious fight, because I have such a good Captain; but sometimes, when I take a view of my enemies, I think I shall never be able to stand against such principalities and powers. The enemy hath too familiar a correspondence with me—spiritual pride and security, how dangerous! Lord, keep me humble and watchful, eying thee the Captain of my salvation, coming out of myself, and walking in thy strength, my soul shall tread down all its enemies, and triumph in Christ Jesus continually.

Conclusion.

1. **W**HAT ends God may have in letting the apprehensions of his wrath continue for a season, we know not; for the judgments of God, yea, great, long, and severe trials, are too deep for us to fathom, or to see what is God's design in this or that. His judgments are not obvious to every one at present, nor will they be fully cleared up till the great day.

2. Who can tell the reason, why God suffers one good man to be in affliction for many years, while others, far less good, scarcely know what affliction means? One shall be crossed and disappointed in all he goes about, and meet with losses in his estate, trials in his family, and be damaged in his health, when another prospers, is quite well, and dies an easy death.

3. In what a smooth path do some good people go to heaven, when others are torn with thorns and briers, and go mourning and weeping all the way! Who dare presume to say why this is so, and not otherwise?

4. Great modesty becomes us in our inquiries, when we endeavour to pry into the designs of the great God, whose throne is established in righteousness, but surrounded with clouds and darkness. *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter*, Prov. xxv. 2. His infinite Majesty will not be accountable to us for what he does. There is a thin veil upon the reasons of his arguments, that he may procure greater veneration from his creatures, Psalm xix. *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known*. Therefore, when we say that God does this or that for such or such a reason, we must say so with great humility, and only so far as the scripture is our guide; and, from which we may learn, that God suffers some of his best people to be under the apprehensions of his wrath, and under long afflictions, for very wise ends.

SHORT
SERMONS

ON
IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;

CHIEFLY
SELECTED AND EXTRACTED

FROM THE
Best Authors.

BY JOHN BEAUMONT.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

LUKE X. 41.

Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her.

1. **M**ARTHA was the head of a little family, in a village near unto Jerusalem, called Bethany.

2. Her brother and sister, Lazarus and Mary, along with her in the same house.

3. They were all lovers of Jesus, and their love was not without returns on his side, as we are told that Jesus loved Martha, her sister and Lazarus.

4. This was a place of retirement, where Christ frequently went, after the fatigues of his ministry in the city.

5. But even when privately among friends, he could not be idle, but must instruct them with heavenly discourse, which was a constant sermon.

6. Mary being passionately devout and eager for instruction, would not neglect such an opportunity, but sits down at his feet, which was the posture of the Jewish pupils before their Master.

7. Here she eagerly catches every word from his lips, from which drops knowledge sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb.

8. Though solicitous for his comfort, yet she makes no great stir in providing for his entertainment; knowing his happiness did not consist in eating and drinking. She knew plain food would be most acceptable to him.

9. Christ did not wish any one to lose their souls while they were making sumptuous provision for him. Mary was so deeply engaged about her salvation, that she was careless about his entertainment.

10. How multiform and extravagant are the ingratiating names of politeness, decency, hospitality, and good economy, to the neglect of the soul's welfare. These refinements render life sordid, laborious, expensive and trifling.

11. Martha, although a pious woman, yet, like too many, was so solicitous about these things, being more concerned about hospitality and good economy, rather than to improve in divine knowledge at this opportunity; hence, instead of sitting at Christ's feet like Mary, she was busy in making preparations, and was distracted with the cares of the family. How rarely do people see any guilty excess in lawful care! Hence Martha blamed Mary for not assisting her, in language somewhat rude and irreverent; as if Christ was partial in suffering Mary to be idly sitting at his feet, instead of helping her.

12. Jesus turned with just severity, and throws the blame where it should lie. *Martha, Martha, &c.* Thy worldly mind has many objects, cares and anxieties; but collect thy thoughts to one point, and remember, *one thing is needful*. Make this one thing needful, the object of thy choice and pursuit, and like Mary, chuse that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

I. What Christ meant by this *one thing needful*?

1. It was something different from, and superior to all the pursuits of time, and therefore what can that be but salvation as the end, and holiness as the means. This is both opposite and superior to the many cares of life.

2. We must be holy in order to be happy. We must pray, hear, read, meditate, and use all the means of grace appointed to produce or cherish holiness in

us; and we must use these constantly, earnestly, diligently, and with zeal, and make all other things give way in comparison of this. This is necessary for all things, at all times, and in all places.

II. Why is it called *one thing*?

1. Because it is one great business; one important object, at which all our endeavours and aims should centre and terminate.

2. It may be said to be one, in opposition to the many things that are the objects of a worldly mind.

3. It may be called *one thing needful*, because needful above all things. There may be other necessities; but this is so absolutely necessary, that nothing else deserves to be called so in comparison of it.

4. Again: It is so absolutely necessary, that no other thing can be said to be like it: all other things are trifles compared with it: it is absolutely necessary both to make us wise, happy, useful and safe.

5. This one thing may be said to be so necessary, because so needful to be attended to at all times, in all circumstances, both in life and death: without it we are eternally undone.

III. Inquire, have you already made this choice?

1. Are not all the joys of heaven worth the little pains of seriously putting this short question to your consciences? Review your hearts and lives. Has this one thing lain more upon your minds than any other thing? Has it been your object, your desire, and earnest pursuit?

2. Has this one thing been habitually uppermost in your hearts, the favourite object of your desires, the happiness of your souls, and the chief concern in your minds above all things in the world?

3. In the great day it will be found, that the main difference between saints and sinners, is this: God, Christ, holiness, and the concerns of eternity, are habitually uppermost in the hearts of the former: but to the latter, they are things but generally, by and by, while the world is their principal concern.

4. To serve God, to obtain his favour, and to be happy for ever, is the main business of the saints, to which all earthly concerns must give way: but to live

in ease, pleasure, riches, and be gratified in some earthly pursuit, is the main concern of the sinner.

5. The one has made a hearty resignation to God, through Christ; serves him with the best, and thinks nothing too good for him: but the other has his exceptions and reserves, viz. he will serve God, provided it consists with ease, pleasure, and temporal interest.

Use 1. To what little purpose will you have lived, if the soul be lost.

2. If the soul be lost, all your pains have been to ruin yourselves.

3. Awake then, and make this happy choice.

SERMON II.

HOW TO USE THE WORLD.

1 COR. vii. 29—32.

The time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

1. **B**EING on the brink of the grave, and ready every moment to shoot the gulf, should teach us always to stand ready.

2. These thoughts should break our connections from things of time and sense, and prepare us for our last remove.

3. Past generations have sickened and died, to warn their successors to prepare for their change.

4. One reason of their attachment to this world, is

their forming too high an estimate of the affairs of time and sense.

I. This I say, brethren.

1. This I pronounce, as from the mouth of God, as a great truth, but little regarded: this I say with the authority of an apostle, as a messenger from heaven, which demands your serious attention.

2. That the time of our continuance on earth is but short; for however severally known and confessed, it is very rarely regarded. Many think no more than they are forced upon it.

3. Many are convinced against their wills, and yet turn every way to avoid it, being always uneasy when it is forced upon them.

II. The time is short.

1. Life itself is compared to a span, an inch, a hair's breadth, a bubble, a tale, a weaver's shuttle, to a post, an eagle through the air. How short the journey from infancy to manhood, and from manhood to old age! Look back on your passage through, does it not appear as if you only entered it yesterday?

2. But how few drag on to seventy or eighty years. Old men can hardly find cotemporaries, a new race having started up, and they are become almost strangers in their own neighbourhood.

3. How strongly does the shortness of this life prove the certainty of another! Would it not be worth our while to live a few days or years, were there no other world, where our powers might open, enlarge, and ripen?

4. Life is so short, both absolutely and comparatively, that even the long life of Methuselah and the antideluvians, shrink into a mere point, a nothing. Sands on the sea-shore, particles of dust, spires of grass; yea, were all these like as many years, they bear a proportion to eternity as a moment, a pulse, or the twinkling of an eye, to ten thousand ages; not even a hair's breadth upon the spot on which we stood to the farthest star, or to the remotest corner of the earth.

5. And is eternity entailed upon us, who are every moment liable to the arrest of death; sinking into the

grave, and mouldering into dust, and whose thoughts and cares, and pursuits, are so confined to earth, as if we had nothing to do with eternity.

6. How insignificant is a moment to seventy years ! But how much more insignificant is the longest life on earth when compared with eternity. Then, how trifling are all the concerns of time to those of eternity and immortality.

7. Of what little concern it is to us, who are to live for ever, whether we live happy or miserable for an hour ? Whether we have wives or none ? Whether we rejoice or weep ; buy, possess, use the world ? Whether we consume away in hunger, nakedness, in the want of all things. It will be all of little moment very soon.

8. How shall we spend this eternal duration ? In sleep, stupid insensibility, indifference, or misery ? No, we must spend it either in the height of happiness, or in the depth of misery. Then we should be above receiving much pleasure or pain from such trifles as excite them in this uncertain state.

9. Here our happiness has some bitter ingredient, and our miseries have some mitigations ; but in that world, good and evil shall be entirely and for ever separated : all will be pure, unmingled happiness ; or pure, unmingled misery.

III. It remaineth that *those that have wives, be as though they had none.*

1. St. Paul is far from recommending a stoical neglect of the dearest relations in life ; but his design was to represent the insignificancy of these relations, considering how short and vanishing they are, and comparing them with the infinite concerns of eternity.

2. In those that have *wives, being as though they had none*, he intends we should not excessively set our hearts even on our dearest relations, to neglect the superior concerns of the world to come, or draw off our affections from God. But yet, we should beware lest this care should run to excess, and lead to carelessness in what is proper attention to our secular concerns.

3. To moderate excessive care and anxiety about

lawful things, the apostle adds, *I would have without carefulness*, viz. that those who have these agreeable weights, should not be over eager for the world, or place their happiness upon it. Heads of families should be as solicitous for heaven as others.

IV. They that *weep*, be as though they wept not.

1. Whatever afflictions we have here, they will not last long, but soon be over, soon be swallowed up in the joys or sorrows of another world: our sighs and tears will soon cease to flow.

2. Whatever afflictions or bereavements we suffer in this world, let us moderate our sorrows, and keep them within due bounds; let them not ferment into murmurings against God. Let them not sink us into sullen dislike of the mercies we enjoy. How unreasonable that God's taking one mercy should tempt us to despise another.

3. Take a view of the blessings still remaining, and we shall find them both more numerous and important than those we have lost. Nature may have fears, but let them not arise to floods of inconsolable sorrows: we may feel our afflictions, but yet bear them as men.

V. They that *rejoice*, as though they rejoiced not.

1. The joys of life, from whatever quarter they spring, are so short and transitory, that they are of no account to a creature who exists in joys or pains of an infinitely higher nature and kind.

2. These uncertain joys should not engross our chief happiness, nor cause us to neglect and forfeit everlasting joys above the skies. These pleasures should not ensnare and become our idols.

3. When we rejoice in earthly blessings, we should be as careful and laborious in securing the favour of God and everlasting happiness, as if we rejoiced not. If our eternal all is secured, it is enough; but if our immortality be spent in misery, what comfort will it be, that we laughed or played away a few years on earth.

VII. Those that *buy*, as though they possessed not.

1. This refers to the merchant, the planter, the tradesman, and indeed to the carrying on of all commerce for the purposes of life. All buy, sell, or ex-

change in some form or other. In the midst of all your possessions, live as if you possessed them not.

2. Alas, of what small account are all things here, when our time is so short, and go as naked out of the world, as we came into it; especially to those who must spend an eternity in better enjoyments.

3. Finally : Let those who use the world not abuse it; but consider the shortness of time, use it, enjoy it, take moderate care about pleasure in it, but not abuse it, by prostituting it to sinful purposes, indulging in extravagance, placing our confidence in it, and singing a requiem to our souls.

Use.

1. Do not use the world to excess, by making it your chief happiness, and drawing you from better enjoyments.

2. Use it not to excess in eating, drinking, dress, equipage, or in any stile of parade and riches.

3. Religion does not make men churlish; but it forbids all excess, and requires us to keep within due bounds of moderation in our enjoyments.

SERMON III.

THE RULE OF EQUITY.

MATT. vii. 12.

Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.

1. **C**HRISTIANITY is a complete system of religion, and intended to make men good throughout. It teaches us how to conduct ourselves both towards God and our fellow creatures.

2. A christian is a complete finished character, in which there is the most amiable symmetry and pro-

portion. It is all of a piece, without chasms and inconsistencies.

3. A christian is a true believer, a lover of God, conscientious in devotion, and diligent in his attendance upon every ordinance of religious worship.

4. To love God with all our heart, and to serve him with all our strength, is the first and great commandment with us, and we must observe it as such.

5. But though christianity begins with, and chiefly consists in our duty to God, yet it extends farther; it also includes a proper conduct and temper towards men.

I. The divine rule of social duty.

There is a great diversity in the stations and characters of men, consequently a proportionable diversity in the duties which they owe to one another; and self-love may make a man very extravagant in his expectations and desires about the conduct of another towards him; on which account this precept is to be taken with some limitations.

1. We should do that to others which we would expect and wish from them upon a change of condition. Every man should be treated according to his character and station; and therefore that conduct which may be proper towards me in my station, may not be proper towards another in a different station: but let me suppose myself in his place and he in mine, and then that behaviour which I would expect from him, the same I should observe towards him.

2. We should only make our reasonable and lawful objections from others the rule of our conduct towards them. A man may expect and wish for very extravagant things from others; as, that another should give him his estate, or gratify his wicked lusts and passions by some criminal compliance: such desires are by no means to be the rule of our conduct, for we cannot indulge them, or others comply with them, without acting wickedly and unreasonably. But those things we may desire and expect of others, consistent with reason, religion, and the laws of society; those things we ought to perform.

II. The reason of this precept.

1. The reason of it is, the natural equality of mankind; for though the capacities, improvements, characters, and stations of men differ widely, yet, considered as man, they share in the same common nature, and are so far equal; and therefore in the same circumstances they have a right to the same treatment. A superior should treat his inferior as he would wish to be treated, if he were in the other's place.

2. Do I expect my neighbour should not encroach on my property? No more should I on his. I do therefore expect my neighbours to observe the rules of justice in his dealings with me: as such, I should observe the same to him.

3. Is it reasonable that I should be tender of his character, and good name? It is equally reasonable that he should be tender of mine. And the reason is plain; he is to himself what I am to myself, and he is to me what I am to him: and therefore I should treat him as I would justly expect he should treat me. We are equal, and also our duties mutual and reciprocal.

III. The excellency of this precept.

1. This appears from its comprehensiveness, including all the social duties of life. It is a short summary of the whole divine law, as far as it refers to our conduct towards men. Christ says, *This is the law and the prophets.*

2. Its conciseness: it being what may be called a portable directory, which may be always carried about with us, and easily recollected: as such, we are at no loss to know our duty. You may always know your own expectations and desires, and always do to others accordingly. The shortest memory cannot fail to recollect this concise command.

3. This is universal, and extends to all mankind, in all circumstances; to superiors, inferiors, and equals. Various characters and stations require a correspondent variety in the duties we owe them: only change your circumstances, and that gives you the idea.

4. It is plain and convictive. Common minds may be bewildered by intricate systems of laws: but a man of the weakest understanding may easily perceive this

rule, being an appeal to his sensations. You soon know what to expect from others, as well as how you wish them to treat you: well, treat them just in the same manner.

IV. Particular cases to which this rule applies.

1. Would you wish others to love, and be ready to serve you, and do you every kind office? *Do ye even so to them.*

2. Do you expect your neighbour should rejoice in your prosperity, sympathize with you in distress, and sooth you in affliction? *Do ye even so to them.*

3. Would you wish them to observe the rules of strict justice in dealing with you, be tender of your reputation, yea, unwilling to believe or spread a bad report? *Do you even so to them.*

4. Do you desire he should direct you when mistaken, and strive to reclaim you from a dangerous course; in short, do you think he should do all in his power for your good, in soul, body, or estate? Then in this manner should you behave towards him. Your expectations from others having the force of a law upon yourselves; and you know how they should behave towards you, you cannot be at any loss to know how to behave towards them.

5. Were you a servant, how would you wish to be treated? The same may be said of rules in general: to parents, children, husbands, wives, neighbours, or strangers.

6. Again: Do you desire another should not be angry, malicious, or passionate, against you; that he should not envy your prosperity, nor insult over you in adversity; nor take advantage of you in contracts, nor violate the laws of commerce to defraud your property; that he should not injure your reputation, by putting any unkind construction upon your conduct? Would you, if a servant, not wish to be tyrannised over, not used hardly; or if a master, that your servant should not be unfaithful, disobedient, and obstinate? Then you have premised a law for your own conduct.

How strange and ridiculous, that you should be treated well by every body, and yet be at liberty to

treat others as you please. What a being of mighty importance ! Is not another as dear to himself as you are to yourself ? Are not his rights as sacred to him as your's is to you ? How came you to be entitled to an exemption from the common laws of human nature ?

By these few instances may be learned the maxims of christian morality to all the cases that may occur in the course of your lives.

V. The necessity and advantage of this rule.

1. To constitute you real christians, it is necessary, not only that you pray, attend ordinances, and the like, but be strict in your morals, just and charitable, and make conscience of every duty ; as it is vain to pretend to christianity without morality. An unjust, uncharitable christian is as great a contradiction, as a swearing, prayerless christian. You can no more be good without loving your neighbour, than without loving God. No knowledge, zeal, or devotion can entitle you to the charity of others, without a proper temper and behaviour towards mankind.

2. A proper conduct is necessary to recommend religion to the world, and reflect honour upon the profession : whereas, the want of it brings a reproach upon the christian name. If any are observed making much ado in attending sermons, prayers, &c. and yet can be deceitful, over-reaching, sordid, and covetous, what will they think of his religion ? Are not the bad lives of professors the common objection against it in the mouths of Jews, Turks and infidels among ourselves.

3. This rule of equity would have a most happy effect and influence upon society, and would make this world a little paradise. If men did to others just what they would wish others to do to them, such a conduct would put an end to a great part of the miseries of mankind.

4. The observance of this rule is a piece of prudence with regard to ourselves. It is of importance to our happiness in this world, that others should treat us well. We are not so independent of others, as to

stand alone. If we do stand, it may be on slippery ground, and we may yet fall as low as others.

6. No zeal in devotion, or profession in religion, will ever bring us to heaven, unless we abound in good works : if therefore you would enjoy the happiness of heaven, and escape the miseries of hell, do to others what you would wish them to do to you.

Reflections.

1. If this be the rule of our conduct, alas, how few christians and how little true morality is there in the world ! Men seem to act as if they were detached from one another, and were not concerned to promote each other's interest. How much does self-love and self-interest become the ruling passion.

2. It will go a great way towards determining whether our religion be true or not, if we make conscience of social duties : this is a promising sign, that God has written his law in our hearts.

3. Let us examine the pulse of our souls, whether it beats warm and full, both with the love of God, and the love of our neighbour. *Whatsoever things are true, honest, venerable, just, pure, and lovely ; if there be any virtue or any praise, let us think on these things.*

SERMON IV.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.

ROM. i. 17.

For herein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.

1. **H**OWEVER the gospel of Christ is esteemed in the world, the Bible speaks of it with the highest encomiums ; and the sacred writers are often in the highest transports when they mention it.

2. It is called the *gospel of grace*, Acts xx. 24. The *gospel of salvation*, Ephes. i. 13. The *glorious gospel*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. The *gospel of peace*, 2 Cor. vi. 15. The *wisdom of God in a mystery*, 1 Cor. ii. 7. The *mystery hid from ages*, Col. i. 26. The *ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 8. And it is represented as the only scheme for the salvation of sinners.

3. The righteousness of faith may be called the righteousness of God, as being distinct from our personal righteousness, as a complete, perfect, divine and godlike righteousness, and not the mean, scanty, imperfect righteousness of sinful, guilty men.

4. It is frequently called the righteousness of Christ, as it consists in his obedience, by which many are righteous. Rom. v. 19. To be justified by Christ's righteousness is the same as being justified by his blood, or by his death; which signifies, that Christ both obeyed the precept, and suffered the penalty of the divine law in our stead, on which account alone we can be justified.

5. This is called the righteousness of God, without the law being imputed to us by faith without works, and is entirely different from our obedience to the law: hence our own obedience does not constitute our justifying righteousness; that being wholly, entirely, and exclusively the merit of Christ's obedience and sufferings.

6. It is also called the righteousness of faith revealed, viz. it is all through faith; or from the faithfulness of God in the word to the grace of faith. The righteousness of Christ is revealed by faith; from whence it may be inferred, that faith has a peculiar concurrence of instrumentality in our justification by the merit of Christ.

7. In the gospel, it is clearly discovered, proposed, and offered as the object of faith, namely, the righteousness of Christ. The light of nature may suggest that repentance, or amendment of life, will meet with a favourable reception, so as that God will not rigorously execute his law, and thus draw a veil over the attribute of justice: but a method of justification by the death of an incarnate God. This is the mystery

which was hid from ages and generations. Nothing but infinite wisdom could continue and reveal it.

8. In the writings of Moses and the prophets, we meet with some glimmerings of it, which shone upon the Jews in their sacrifices, types, and prophecies : hence it is said, the righteousness of God is witnessed by the law and the prophets : but it is in the gospel alone that it is explicitly and fully reavealed.

9. The gospel makes a most glorious and full discovery, which all the Jews with all the law could not make, and which the Greeks with all their philosophy could not even guess at. This righteousness is a sufficient foundation for sinners in all countries, which is what the neglected and despised gospel reveals.

10. No religion but that of the Mediator can provide, or even propose such a righteousness, and yet without it, no sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, can be saved. This righteousness encourages the sinner, by laying a foundation for the influences of the Holy Spirit, without which this work can never be effected.

I. Explain the nature of justifying faith.

1. To be justified, is to be received into favour, by a person whom you have offended. When justified, God forgives all your sins, and receives you again into his love and favour, and gives you a title to everlasting life.

2. Justifying faith includes a full persuasion of the truth of that method of salvation through Christ, which the gospel reveals. Hence faith is said to be a receiving the *witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son* ; the substance of which is, *That God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

3. The gospel scheme supposes that all are sinners, are unable to make satisfaction for their offences ; but that Christ has substituted himself in the sinner's place, bearing the punishment due to their sin, and obeying the law of God in their stead ; and that God is willing to be reconciled to us on these terms.

4. A speculative faith may be easy ; but for one who is self-condemned, broken-hearted, and sees his sins in all their aggravated forms, and the severity of divine justice ; for one that finds his heart rising

against this method of salvation—to believe is not an easy matter : *it is the working of God's mighty power.*

5. Justifying faith includes a hearty approbation of, and consent to, this method of salvation by the merit of Christ. To believe the gospel as a by-story is easy, especially with languid indifference ; but to feel an hearty approbation of this way of salvation through Christ, a delightful dependence upon it, a free, vigorous choice of it, and a cheerful consent to all these terms—this is essential to true, living faith. To receive such a scheme with a languid consent or assent, what profaneness ! what impiety ! Faith always supposes the supernatural illumination of the mind and renovation of the heart, by the power of divine grace.

II. Nothing but faith in Christ will justify a sinner.

1. Is a blind careless sinner likely to form a just estimate of the evil of sin, and of that righteousness which will acquit him before God ? Nothing can ease the conscience but an application of the precious merits of Christ.

2. Let us think of, and place ourselves before him, by whose brightness the stars are turned into darkness ; by whose power the mountains are melted ; at whose anger the earth trembles ; by whose wisdom the wise are caught in their own craftiness ; before whose purity all things are turned into pollution ; whose justice even angels are not able sufficiently to bear ; who will by no means clear the guilty ; whose vengeance, when once it is kindled, burns and penetrates to the lowest hell : I say, let him thus sit judge on the actions of men, and who can stand before him ? All must be condemned, and unavoidably perish !

3. When we are justified, it may be said we are acquitted according to justice ; because Christ's merits imputed, answers all demands of the law, having no charges against him that believes in Christ ; so that he is both pardoned, and pronounced righteous, according to law and justice. No righteousness can justify but what is equal to the demands of the law ; it must be perfect, and up to the standard ; without which, the law charges us as transgressors, and its

sentence lies in force against us: but when we believe in Christ, we are accounted righteous before God, through the merit of his Son.

III. The true gospel way of salvation.

1. The jewish religion gave several intimations of this method of salvation, by faith in Christ: but not near so clear as the gospel.

2. The religion of Mahomet is silent upon this head, and even Socrates and Plato, of heathen antiquity, knew nothing about it.

3. The light of nature might surmise a great many things on this head; but alas, all was uncertain and precarious to them!

4. The pardon of a crime is a matter of sovereignty, and only has place in such governments where the royal prerogative is above law, and has a power to dispense with it; and it lies in the breast of the Supreme Ruler, whether he will pardon penitents or not.

5. This shews the necessity of a divine revelation from God, to shew whether he will pardon it or not, and to give assurance that he will pardon him upon any terms.

Reflections.

1. Let this subject us to strict examination, of the grounds of our hope, viz. whether it be founded on the merits of Christ, or upon our own good works, which is a sandy foundation.

2. This subject affords great encouragement, and strong consolation. Your only refuge is the merits and righteousness of Christ, obtained by faith.

3. Thousands have built on this foundation, and it has never failed them; and nothing can be brought against you, but what it will fully answer.

SERMON V.

THE MUTUAL DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

EPHES. V. 23.

*Let every one in particular so love his wife as himself,
and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

I. **T**HE mutual duties of husband and wife.

1. Mutual *cohabitation*. Neither desire of gain, fear of trouble, occasional distastes, nor pretence of religion, should separate those from conjugal converse and cohabitation, unless with consent, and that for a time: *Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder.*

2. Mutual love. This is the conjugal grace, the great reason, and the great comfort of marriage. Not a sensual or doting passion, but genuine, constant, and conjugal love—*Pure heart fervently*. True love is not grounded on beauty, wealth, or interest, nor only upon grace and piety, for this may decay and quite disappear; but it must be grounded on the command and ordinance of God, whereby of two they are made of one flesh; so that, though either of them be poor, deformed, froward, unregenerate, wicked, and infidels, yet, in obedience to God, they ought to love one another with a superlative love.

3. Mutual fidelity, especially in respect to the marriage bed, and also in each other's secrets. The least deviation herein will strangely get ground, and never rest till it come to plain downright adultery; for, although the comfort of their lives, the quiet of their consciences, and the credit of their families lie bleeding, and, without true repentance, their eternal happiness shipwrecked. Therefore all possible care must be used to avoid all occasions and incentives of wandering desires from home; and the rather, because he or she that is not content with one, will not be content with more.

4. The same mutual faithfulness is necessary in the wise concealment of each other's secrets, whether natural, moral, or civil. There cannot be a more unnatural treachery, than when husband and wife make one another obnoxious to shame; when it is done by inadvertency it is bad, but when in a passion and through ill will, it is worst of all.

5. Mutual helpfulness: Hence called yoke fellows, *helpmate for him*, or *an help like him*. There are three yokes they should carry:—The yoke of cares; the yoke of crosses; the yoke of Christ.

6. Mutual patience. Alas! a civil war within doors is the worst of all. The soul and body, religious worship, with family affairs—these are all brought into disorder by it. No good can come of passion, it reforms nothing; but patience may do much. Therefore pray for a meek quiet spirit; mortify pride, learn self-denial, and sometimes wisely withdraw till the storm be over; hold your peace, sometimes, to keep peace.

7. Mutual endeavours for each other's salvation: This should be your chief design. If you suffer one another to be damned, where is your love. If you be married to Christ, your work is to build one another up in your most holy faith. Study each other's dispositions, that you may apply proper remedies; you should in both your carriages declare plainly that you are going together to such a country—the heavenly Jerusalem.

8. Mutual marriage chastity: Herein be chaste, abhor all wanton speeches and improper incentives of lust; therefore be sober, reasonable, and regular in the use of the marriage bed. Divines tell us, that the pleasures of marriage should be serious, circumspect, and mixt with severity, and that an intemperate man in wedlock differs but little from an adulterer.

9. Mutual care of each other's health, wealth, credit, and contentment. The husband must use all his care and skill and strength to procure a competency, and the wife all her's to further it. Each other's reputation should be tender as *the apple of an eye*.

10. Mutual prayer, *as being heirs together of the*

grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. The purest love is written in prayer. This is the best preserver of it.

II. How must this love be manifested ?

1. It must be hearty, without dissimulation ; free without being prevented before, or rewarded after. It must be holy without impurity. It must be great without comparison ; constant without alteration, active and fruitful.

2. The husband ought to love his wife as himself, tenderly, cheerfully, and constantly. The wife should need no mediator to her husband, for she should have his ear open, his hand and heart ready to pity and help, yea, and even gratify her, as he is ready to help and gratify himself.

3. The effects will be instruction, reproof, encouragement, comfort, making provision, shewing tenderness, good example, and trusting her in all domestic affairs.

III. The wife's duty to her husband.

1. Esteem and reverence him ; without this she cannot, nor she will not be a good wife. It is made up of estimation, love, and fear. The wife's love should be as the church loves Christ, and as the members should love the head. The manner, in every thing ; the manner free, willing, cheerful, and constant.

2. The effects will be seen in her respect and honour, by being obedient to his directions and restraints, and also by asking and hearkening to his counsel. This will shew itself in all her behaviour.

III. Directions how to accomplish this duty.

1. Maintain purity in soul and body, and keep a single eye.

2. Be considerate and wise in your choice.

3. Study marriage duties well beforehand.

4. Resign up yourselves to God before your choice is made.

5. Settle your affections well at the beginning.

6. Pray for wisdom to remove or prevent things that would give offence ; choose the fittest opportunity for reproof, advice, instruction, or comfort.

7. Keep humble :—This will keep the husband from the intemperate use of his power, and the wife in ready subjection to her husband.

8. Be upright :—This will teach you rather to obey than to dispute. An upright mind will suffer the greatest injury, rather than offer the least ; it watches against sinful self.

SERMON VI.

ON PARENTAL DUTIES.

COL. iii. 21.

Fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

I. **T**HE parents office and duty.

1. Do not irritate or provoke the passions of children, by loading them with impious and inhuman commands without necessity ; compelling them to sordid and servile works, not fit for ingenuous children, but slaves ; treating them with tumultuous words, for not just hitting their humour. Bitter words will only tend to exasperate ; to be morose and sharp for little offences, as beating them to gratify their passion or revenge, inflicting penalties no way proportioned to the fault, not in a humane merciful way. Imperiously imposing upon children in the great concern of changing their condition. Parents conduct should be betwixt extremes ; between indulgence and rigour, that their children may both love and honour their presence.

2. Parents should pray earnestly and without ceasing, upon all occasions, for all things, throughout their whole lives : They should be daily intercessors at the throne of grace, that God would graciously change their hearts.

3. Good behaviour before God and man, in love to our children. To follow prayer, with upright walking, is the best way that parents can take.

Good education: Parents should timely inure their children to good behaviour, before they degenerate—they should consult their temper, observe their ingenuity and humours, to find out their inclination, and fit them to their generation. This should be done by example, or rules of morality, and by moderate chastisement.

II. *Parents to be careful—Lest they should be discouraged.*

1. Lest the children be consumed with sorrow, or discouraged, pining away with grief.

2. Lest it make them stupid, fearful, dull, and unfit for any work. They are thereby in danger of taking to the wretched boldness of doing wrong and displeasing, and thereby become like rustic colts, which fling and kick, so as to do all the mischief they can; and generally make a head the more to irritate their parents' passions, which is the height of impiety: and when come to this, seldom take up till they have ruined themselves.

3. To neglect this duty, is to throw away your crown, to spoil your own heritage, to rob yourself of that which should give you rest; nay, it is to rob God, as your children are more God's than your's.

4. Let your conduct to your children be just and temperate, grave and prudent, that it may be like the children's obedience, *well pleasing to the Lord.*

III. The manner of managing this duty, both by Children and Parents.

To Children.

1. Be sensible of the mischief of disobedience, and the benefit of obedience; and believe the punishment of the former, and the reward of the latter.

2. Remove all tendencies to the dishonour of Parents, and set a value upon their instructions.

3. Banish inordinate affections, which alienate the heart from duty, as self-conceitedness and prodigality.

4. Take heed not to associate with ignorant and wicked companions: be afraid of whisperers, who

secretly suggest things which may tend to make parents cheap.

5. Perform all these duties with sincerity: did we reverence ourselves more, we should behave better to our superiors.

6. Obey your parents' commands willingly, cheerfully and readily; not with grudging and disdain, but a holy warmth of heart: yea, with delight and pleasure.

7. Be diligent and persevere to the end, whatever temptations you may meet with to the contrary.

To Parents.

1. Be sure to press up the life and power of religion in your domestic affairs: and always encourage your children in all holy conversation.

2. Maintain your parental authority, and assert the dignity of your relation; yet not with lordly vigour but with love and mildness. Make not yourselves cheap, by an unbecoming familiarity.

3. Sweeten all with endearing expressions of kindness. to insinuate into their affections. This will make your government easy and acceptable.

4. Labour to carry with all evenness and impartiality to every child, according to a rational proportion, so that it may be evident, you account all that descend from you dear, or beloved children.

5. Advise with your faithful pastors and spiritual guides, especially in more intricate circumstances; yea, and study well your office.

SERMON VII.

THE OBEDIENCE OF SERVANTS.

EPHES. vi. 5—9.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart: with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing, that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

I. **W**HAT by masters and servants?

1. Master or mistress signifies one that hath the government of him or herself, and upon whose government and command another dependeth. In an absolute sense, there is none may be called master but God.

2. But in a limited sense, there are masters, to which and to whom honour must be paid by these servants, so far as they command nothing contrary to God's will.

3. By servant, is meant one that is not at his own disposal, but at the command of another, so far as they thwart not God's will. Now this relation arises from nature, law, and conscience.

(1.) From nature. As some have stronger bodies and understandings, they have more judgment and experience, and therefore more fit to rule.

(2.) From law. Some have forfeited their liberty, and are condemned to servility, either for a time, or for life.

(3.) From conscience and contract. When one subjects himself to another's command for a certain time, upon such and such conditions.

II. How are both to eye their great Master in heaven?

1. Both are to have an eye to the presence of their great Master which is heaven.

2. Both must have an eye to his glory. In every action we should either habitually or actually respect God's glory in it.

3. Both, in all things, great and small, should have an eye to the command of their great Master in heaven.

4. Both should have an eye to, and look for the assistance of their great Master in heaven; and

5. Both should have an eye to the sovereignty, power, and justice of their great Master.

III. What is the master's duty?

1. Let masters take heed not to be servants to sin and Satan, and rebels to God. A bad man is not like to be a good master.

2. Take heed of idleness, carelessness, and trusting your servants too much; as masters' negligence tempts the servants to unfaithfulness.

3. Take heed who you admit into your family. Bad parents, examples, precepts, and being accustomed to lying from the cradle: these are very bad properties.

4. Take heed of putting your servants upon too much work, as it is the way to alienate their affections. It makes them incapable of their duty to God, and puts them upon cries and groans to him that hears the oppressed. By this you make them more blockish, and less ingenuous, and consequently not fit to carry on your interest. It is also contrary to humanity. Servants are inferiors, and are to be accounted next your children: not vassals, but servants.

5. Take heed of letting them have too little employment; as it is dangerous to get a habit of idleness, and especially, as you must give an account of your own time, so of your servants.

6. Take heed of bitterness and threatening, of cruelty and injustice; of wronging them in meat, drink, clothing, or lodging, and of neglecting them when they are sick, and denying them that tendency, physic, and care, that is fit for them at such a time.

7. Take heed of calling them names, cursing, or

correcting them with unreasonable weapons : and above all, neglect not their souls.

IV. The duties of masters.

1. Let all masters endeavour to be God's servants : this will teach a man his duty.

2. Endeavour the good of those under your care. Be in travail until you see Christ formed in their hearts. Give them no rest till you have prevailed upon them to be good.

3. Diligently instruct your servants in their calling. Conceal nothing of the mystery of your art from them.

4. Be just, compassionate, and loving ; and be as ready to encourage and command them in their duty, as to reprove them for the neglect of it. Let their food be wholesome, seasonable, and sufficient for nature. Use your tongues to sweetness : *A soft word turneth away wrath.* Be faithful to your contract—full wages. It is better to be more, than less than your bargain. Be angry at nothing but sin.

5. Discharge your servants with sweetness and love. Send them out of your family with the good will of a father ; and reckon one that was a faithful servant to you for seven years, deserves to be esteemed next to a child ever after. Give him a good report, raise his reputation and credit, and help him as far as you can in his setting up in business. God required in old time, that when a servant served six years, he should not be sent empty away. Deut. xv. 13, 14. "Furnish him liberally out of the flock, floor, and out of thy wine-press." Nothing gives us a discharge from the works of charity and mercy.

V. Exhort masters to their duty.

1. Consider what a master God is to his servants. He is both just and righteous in all his dealings. Who can say he is a hard master, when he is full of pity, and ready to forgive ?

2. Consider what need your servants have of your utmost care. They are young and inexperienced, heady, ignorant, proud, dead to God, and children of wrath.

3. How much it will be for your honour. How

high a value will good men and magistrates set on you. What reason will you have to call such blessed.

4. Consider, how pleasing and acceptable to God. Such the Lord is nigh to, and beholds with delight.

5. Consider how much profit and pleasure you shall have here. By this you will be enriched.

6. How much good your faithfulness may be to others. Your very servants may call you their spiritual fathers.

7. Consider the danger of your neglect, if you be unfaithful. You expose your body, soul, estate, wife, children, and servants, to sin, ruin, and shame, and the cause of God, for ever.

VI. Directions to servants.

1. Take care of pride. Obey all lawful commands. Be not negligent, idle, or careless. Take care not to be a mere eye servant. Avoid all lying, purloining, or embezzling your master's goods. Beware of bad company, of disclosing your master's secrets: of murmuring, discontent, and repining, and of sinning to please your master.

Lastly: Honour your masters. Obey them cheerfully, universally, and constantly, as long as you stand in that relation. Be faithful in word and deed. Speak well of them behind their backs, and keep up their credit and reputation. Be diligent in their business; dispatch it with speed and expedition; and remember, your time and strength is theirs.

SERMON VIII.

ON TRAINING UP CHILDREN.

PROV. xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

I. **W**HEREIN does the good education of children consist?

1. In the tender and careful nursing of them. This affection and tenderness nature hath implanted in all living creatures towards their young ones; and there cannot be a greater reproach than to neglect it.

2. In bringing them in early life to be baptized, and admitted as members of Christ's visible church.

3. By degrees to inform them, and carefully to instruct them in the whole compass of their duty to God, their neighbour, and themselves.

4. By endeavouring, with the greatest care and prudence imaginable, to reform their lives, and rectify their manners to religion and virtue; viz. to obedience and modesty, diligence and sincerity, to tenderness and piety, to sobriety and temperance, to justice, honesty, and charity.

5. Good education consists in wise and early restraints from that which is evil, by seasonable reproof and correction. If a sharp word and a severe admonition will do without the rod, it may be spared.

6. Let not lenity give encouragement to sin, but let them see, if there be no reformation, they must certainly be punished.

II. How may this important work be effected?

1. Endeavour to discover the particular temper and disposition of children, that you may govern them in the easiest way.

2. Endeavour to plant those principles in them which are most substantial, and best calculated to govern their lives for lasting good.

3. Do all you can to check and discourage in them the first beginnings of sin, and vice, of every sort.

4. As soon as they are capable of it, bring them to the public worship of God, where he has promised his blessing.

5. Be careful to put them on those exercises in religion, as their understanding and age are capable of. Teach them some short prayers on their knees in private, at least morning and evening. It is said of the Persians, that they taught them to be virtuous rather than learned; and that they taught them to be honest, just, temperate, wise, and valiant: but let parents in general, attend both to learning and virtue.

6. There must be great care and diligence used in this whole business of instructing children; viz. there must be line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Knowledge and piety must be instilled into them by degrees, and as they can bear it.

7. With some children, the seed is long sown before it appears, which should prevent the despair of parents. It requires much pains to rectify a perverse disposition. It is more easy to palliate than to cure corrupt nature. Bad inclinations must be stopped and checked; then weakened, and the force broken by degrees, and if possible rooted up.

8. To all these means we must add our constant and earnest prayers to God for our children, that his grace may take an early possession of them, in giving them virtuous inclinations, and good dispositions. Beseech the Lord to season their tender years with his fear, which is the beginning of true wisdom. Pray for them as Abraham did for Ishmael: *O that Ishmael may live before thee—may live in thy sight!*

Lastly: Pray for them without ceasing, without fainting. Great importunity in prayer, seldom returns without an answer. Importunate prayer is a firm belief and confidence in his great goodness: and to them that believe, all things are possible.

SERMON IX.

ON FAMILY RELIGION.

1 TIM. V. 8.

If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

1. **T**HE great Creator has made us sociable creatures, and instituted various societies, both civil and religious, and joined them by various bonds of relation

2. Thus in paradise, when the Creator saw it was not good for man to be alone, formed an helpmate for him, uniting them in the most endearing bonds of conjugal relation.

3. From thence the human race was propagated, and when multiplied, it was formed into civil governments and ecclesiastical assemblies.

4. Without these associations the worship of God could not be publicly and socially performed, and liberty and prosperity could not be secured.

5. Without these men would turn savages, destitute of religion, insensible of human passions, and regardless of each other's welfare—hence civil and religious societies are continued in the world.

6. It is of the greatest importance to religion and civil society, that families be under proper regulations.

7. In families, as well as governments, there are superiors and inferiors—and as it is the place of the latter to obey, so it belongs to the former both to rule and provide. This is implied in the text, where the omission of this duty is made inconsistent with Christianity.

8. In this chapter we are directed, that, if there were widows entirely destitute of relations to support them, then the Apostle advises to maintain them at the public expences of the church; but if they had

children or nephews, then their relations, and not the church, should support them.

9. But suppose any should be unwilling to do this, in the text he exposes the unnatural wickedness of neglecting it, "*If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*"

I. Prove that family religion is a duty.

1. If family religion be a just debt to the supreme Being, on account of his perfections and the relations he sustains to us as families, then it must be our duty to maintain it according to the law of nature. God is the most excellent of all beings, and therefore worthy of our homage in every capacity—hence it follows, that our capacity is the measure of our obligation to serve him, because he justly deserves it.

2. As God is the author of our social natures, and formed us capable of society, and inclined us to it, as such he has a right to claim our social worship; and surely this capacity ought to be improved for religious purposes.

3. As God is the proprietor, supporter. and benefactor of our persons and families, therefore our families, as such, should pay him suitable homage. If he be the owner, it would be impious to say he has no right to demand our worship.

4. If in uniting families, religion was one principal design, then is family religion our indispensable duty; and it can hardly be imagined that God would unite a number of immortal heirs of the eternal world in the most tender bonds, in this state of trial, without any reference to their future state. If your families were made for the next world, then religion must be maintained in them.

5. If conjugal relation, which is the foundation of families, was first instituted for religious purposes, then certainly the worship of God ought to be maintained in them. Did not God make one for each sex, that there might be one for one; and is not this an intimation that polygamy was unnatural?

6. Why did God make but one of each sex, but *that*

he might seek a good seed, viz. that his children might not only be procreated, but retain and convey down religion from age to age. But is this likely to be done if family religion be neglected? Can a goodly seed be raised in so corrupt a soil? To neglect this duty then, is to act in direct opposition to the end of this institution.

7. If family religion tends to great advantage, then to neglect it is to rob ourselves and others of that blessing; and to deny this would be to renounce religion at once. Religion places its subjects under the guardianship of heaven, and restrains them from those practices which would ruin them in time and in eternity.

8. Is it not more probable that your families will be religious if you worship God with them, and instruct them, than if you neglected these duties? How can you expect your children and servants to be religious, if educated in the neglect of it? Can prayerless parents expect praying children?

9. Besides, their immortal souls are intrusted to your care, and you must give a solemn account of your trust; and do you discharge it while you neglect to maintain religion in your families? What an awful account may you not expect to give of them at the last day!

10. Family religion is not merely a duty, but is your greatest duty. How great the privilege to hold daily converse with heaven in our dwellings! Yea, how honourable and pleasant to have our dwellings turned to temples.

II. The necessity of this duty; which appears from the example of former saints. Good examples infer an obligation on us to imitate them, and especially when transmitted down to posterity.

1. Abraham was admitted into such intimacy with God, that he admits him into his secrets. *Shall I hid from Abraham that thing which I do, since I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord* Gen. xviii. 10—18.

2. We find Isaac and Jacob, by the influence of hi

good example and instructions, followed the same practice; they, as well as he, built an altar to the Lord wherever they pitched their tents—an altar being then necessary as an utensil to divine worship.

3. We find Job was so intent on family devotion, that he rises up early in the morning and offers burnt offerings; and we are told that thus he did, not upon extraordinary occasions only, but continually. Job i. 5.

4. David, the devout king, after he had spent the day in glad solemnity in bringing the ark to its place, returned to bless his house, 2 Sam. vi. 20. He had his hour for family devotion, and when that is come, he leaves the solemnity of public worship, and hastens home.

5. Daniel ran the risk of his life rather than omit this duty, which some omit with scarce any temptation. When the royal edict prohibited him, on penalty of being cast into the lion's den, he still prayed and gave thanks to God, as he did aforetime. This is added to shew, that he had always observed a stated course of devotion in his family. These were in the Old Testament.

6. We also find our blessed Lord in the New Testament, with his family the Apostles; and St. Paul twice mentions a church in a private house, Rom. xvi. 5.—1 Cor. x. 14.—Col. iv. 15, by which he might mean the family of Nymphas, Priscilla, and Aquila. And Cornelius is an instance peculiarly observable, who, though an heathen, *feared God with all his house, and prayed to God always*, viz. at all times, all proper seasons. And when a divine messenger ordered him to send for Peter, we are told he was found *praying in his house*, viz. with his family and domestics.

III. This duty appears necessary too from scripture precepts.

1. St. Paul having given various directions about relative duties in families, subjoins, *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*, Col. iv. 2.

2. St. Peter exhorts husbands to *dwell with wives according to knowledge, &c. that their prayers might*

not be hindered, Peter iii. 7, which does certainly imply that they should pray together ; and it might mean also, that it may be very proper for husband and wife to retire for prayer, at proper seasons, by themselves.

3. Family instruction is also enjoined to the Israelites. *These words—thou shalt teach them to thy children diligently, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house*, Deut. vi. 6, 7. And it is now enjoined as a duty common to all Christians in general, to exhort, teach, admonish one another, Heb. iii. 13.—Col. iii. 16.

4. As to family praise, it being so often joined with prayer in scripture, is a proof that it is a duty, Phil. iv. 6.—Col. iv. 2.—1 Thess. v. 17, 18, and singing the praises of God must be owned as a part of divine worship. *The voice of joy and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous*, Psalm cxviii. 15. Praising God in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, Col. iii. 16.

IV. What seasons, or how frequently family religion should be performed.

1. Every day, and particularly morning and evening. Thus their daily sacrifices were attended with prayer, morning and evening. To this the Psalmist alludes by saying, *Let my prayer be set before thee as an incense, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice*. Yea, he adds, *And at noon will I pray and cry aloud*, Psalm lv. 17. Reason directs that morning and evening are the proper seasons for family worship.

2. The very course of nature seems to direct us to these seasons ; for our very life is parcelled out into so many days, and every night is a kind of sleep, a kind of death. And shall we enter upon life in the morning without acknowledging the author of our life ? or shall we, as it were, die in the evening, and not commend our departing spirits into his hands ? Night is a kind of pause, or stop, in the progress of life, and should kindle a devout temper in us towards our divine Preserver.

3. The Prophet also hints, that we should seek the Lord as the author of our revolutions of day and night : *Seek him that turneth the shadow of death into the*

morning, and maketh the day dark with night, Amos v. 8, viz. seek him under that notion.

V. The authority and obligation of heads of families to this duty.

1. In all societies there must be a head, as well as subordination, and particularly in families; and it is the place of the heads of such societies and families to rule and direct, particularly in family worship. Gentle methods should be used; but if these succeed not, then compulsive measures may and ought to be taken.

2. That you are authorized and obliged to all this is evident from God's commending Abraham for commanding his children; from Joshua's resolving that both *he and his house should serve the Lord*, Joshua xxiv. 15; which resolution he could not have made or performed without authority.

3. From the superiority which you have over your domestics, which enables you to command them in this case, as well as in your own affairs.

VI. Answer a few objections.

1. My business will not afford me time for family religion. Were you to live here always, there would be some force in the plea; but what is your time given for but to prepare for eternity? And what! no time for the great business of life? Why not plead, you have no time for your meals?

2. I have not ability to pray, I am too ignorant. If you were sensible of your wants, this would not hinder. Did you ever hear a beggar make this objection? A sense of our needs is a never-failing fountain of eloquence. What, have you enjoyed preaching, bibles, and ordinances so long, and yet do not know how to pray to God? Or is neglecting prayer the way to improve it?

3. I am ashamed. But is this shame well grounded? What! ashamed to worship God? Shame on you.

4. I know not how to begin. But had you not better reform and begin, than persist obstinately in the omission of an evident duty?

5. My family will not join with me. Have you tried? Are you not master of your family? Exert your authority.

6. But I shall be laughed at. Are you then more afraid of a laugh, a jeer, than of the displeasure of God? Will you never begin till you get their approbation? Think how you will bear the contempt of the whole universe at the last day, for the neglect of this duty.

SERMON X.

ON FAMILY PRAYER.

JOSHUA, xxiv. 15.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

I. **T**HE word House.

1. An earthly habitation.
2. The house appointed for all living.
3. Worldly estates and earthly riches.
4. The house laid up in heaven.
5. Persons belonging to the same family.
6. Our weak, frail, vile bodies. Here,
7. Ourselves, wives, children, and servants.
8. It is the duty of all families to pray jointly.
9. Family worship should be so managed that all may be benefited.
10. It should be performed conscientiously, seriously, and constantly.

II. Reasons for performing this duty.

1. Nature tells us, that no man is born for himself, to mind his own good only; but to endeavour the good of that family or society of which he is a member.
2. Reason tells you, that for you to pray with your families tendeth to their good, and the neglect thereof to their detriment and damage.
3. God is the founder of all families. Husbands

and wives, parents and children, masters and servants ; all these are from God.

4. God is the owner of our families. He has given us our being and all we have ; he has preserved, provided for, and redeemed us by his blood.

5. God is the master and governor of our families, as such they should serve him in prayer and praise. God is our ruler as well as owner, therefore should our families serve him. Do not subjects owe obedience to their governors ? so do we to God.

6. God is the benefactor of our families. Is not our houses and food, and every other necessary good thing, a reason sufficient why we should praise our bountiful Benefactor ?

IV. Why should family duties be daily performed ?

1. Because every day we receive new family mercies from the hand of the great Governor of the universe.

2. Because there are too often sins committed every day in some part of our family.

3. Because there are daily many family wants, which none can supply but God.

4. Because of your family's daily employments and labours ; every one who puts his hand to work, and head to contrive, should set his heart to pray.

5. Because every day we are liable to temptations. Is Satan a subtle, watchful, powerful, and unwearied enemy ? and do you not need all to pray together ? Most certainly.

6. Because all in your families are liable to daily hazards, casualties, and afflictions, and praying might prevent them, or obtain strength to bear them.

7. You must pray in your families daily, or else the heathens will rise up against you Christians, and condemn you.

V. How to manage this duty to advantage.

1. Let masters of families exercise their authority in the good government of their families.

2. The master thereof should make it his business to be accomplished with gifts and knowledge suitable to the place where God hath set him. Ignorance in a

master renders him incapable of the discharge of the duties of his place.

3. The master should instruct each member of his household in the principles of religion, that they may be able to understand the matter of the prayers that are to be put up to God.

4. The master of the family should get his own heart in a good frame, and get his own affections warmed in the duty.

5. Prepare the family by short advice, to carry themselves as becomes those that are going to speak to the great eternal God.

6. Masters should understand the spiritual condition of every one in the family, that they may put up requests suitable to their condition.

7. Keep seasonable hours for family prayer, and take the fittest time when all are most free from distraction and disturbance.

8. Spend so much time in family prayer, that those that join may be affected, but not so much as to be wearied with the duty.

VI. Directions.

1. Be present at every family duty, and from the beginning to the end.

2. Give diligent attention what confessions of sins are made, what petitions put up, and what praises returned to God for mercies received.

3. Make particular application of the several petitions of the prayer to yourselves.

4. Get and keep upon your hearts awful and lively impressions of the perfections of that God to whom you pray.

5. Realize invisible things to yourselves, by believing them as certainly as if you saw them with your eyes.

6. Be laborious and importunate in your prayers and elevations.

Motives.

1. The souls of your family are valuable.

2. These souls are your charge.

3. Family religion hands it down to posterity.

4. It will be a good way to make your families obedient.

5. Its neglect will bring on that family a curse.

SERMON XI.

THE CONVERSION OF BABES AND SUCKLINGS.

PSALM viii. 2.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and avenger.

THIS is a Psalm of praise, for the dignity put upon man above all his works; they take notice of God's works of creation and providence, and also the grand mysteries of redemption.

2. There is a double duty imposed upon men, viz. both to subdue and to conquer his enemies.

3. God hath made him lord of all his other creatures; so that man is both his champion and his deputy.

I. Who are these babes and sucklings?

1. Man in general, who sprung from so weak a beginning as that of babes and sucklings, yet is become able to grapple with and overcome the enemy and the avenger.

2. David, who being but a youth, God used him as an instrument to discomfit Goliath of Gath.

3. Jesus Christ especially, who assumed our nature and submitted to the weakness of an infant, and after dying, went in human nature to reign in heaven, till he hath brought all his enemies under his feet. This was human nature highly exalted.

4. The Apostles, who to human appearance were

despicable, and in a manner children and sucklings, in comparison of the great ones of the world—poor despised creatures, yet principal instruments of God's service and glory, Matt. xi. 25.

5. Those children that cried Hosanna to Christ make up part of the sense, Matt. xxi. 16. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise*; for Christ defended their practice when condemned by the wisest and greatest of men; yea, when he was degraded by the Scribes and Pharisees, he was praised and welcomed by the children, as the Messiah or Son of David.

6. Not only his ministers, but all his children, who fight under his banner, may be called babes and sucklings, both because of their outward *condition*, and their inward *disposition*.

1. Their *condition*: God is pleased to make choice of the meanest and lowest, 1 Cor. i. 27. *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty*, viz. God is pleased to subdue the enemies of his kingdom by weak and despised instruments.

2. Their *disposition*: They are most humble spirited, Matt. xviii. 3. *Except ye become as little children, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God*. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of babes, and containeth none but the *humble*, and such as are little in their own eyes, and are content to be despised by others. A young child knows not what striving or state meaneth; thus, by the emblem of a child set in the midst of them, Christ would take them off from the expectation of a carnal and temporal kingdom.

II. Who is the enemy and the avenger?

1. He is called the adversary, an enemy, the devil, satan, the god of this world, the accuser of the brethren, the avenger of blood, and a ramping roaring lion.

2. But here he is stiled the enemy and the avenger, viz. the devil and his agents. Of the tares it is said, *The enemy that soweth them is the devil*, Matt. xiii. 39. And with him all the seed of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. Those are wicked men, John viii. 44. Ye

are of your father the devil, for his works ye do. In St. John's first Epistle, chap. iv. verse 4, it is said, *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* This war is carried on between two heads and two seeds.

III. What was it that raised the Psalmist to praise God?

1. That God hath ordained strength. 2. That this lieth in the mouths of babes and sucklings. And 3. That this strength is sufficient to still the enemy and the avenger.

1. That there is strength in such weak creatures; Christ was despised, scorned, scourged, crucified, and yet made perfect through sufferings, and crowned with glory and honour, Heb. ii. 9. Christ can subdue both his enemies and ours. Christians are weak in themselves, but he hath ordained strength for them, to do and suffer all his will. Angels fell never to rise again, but God ordained strength for man, to recover him out of his thralldom. This strength is said to be ordained, or founded, because it standeth upon a good foundation, the everlasting merits of the Son of God.

2. That this strength cometh out of the mouth, viz. not by the power of the sword, or by visible force or might, but the breath of his mouth, viz. 1. By the word preached, he shall consume antichrist by the breath of his mouth, Ephes. ii. 5, viz. subdue and vanquish opposition by his wonderful powerful word; therefore called the rod of his strength. 2. By confessing his name, Rom. x. 9. This is one means of conviction; this bold confession is both the fruit of the word preached, and of the spirit of faith given.

3. The effect, to still the enemy and avenger, viz. either by bridling his rage, Psalm lxxvi. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* Or else silencing this contradiction, as Acts vi. 10. *They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.* Simon wondered, beholding the signs and miracles that were done, Acts viii. 1.—ix. 6. or changing their hearts, thus making them instrumental in changing others.

IV. How far is the enemy and avenger stilled ?

1. Not to take away his life ; for, there will be a devil when the whole work of Christ's redemption is finished, Rev. xx. 10. Satan was condemned before, but then he will be finally punished, and forever remain among the damned.

2. Not in regard of malice and enmity, for he is always the destroyer of souls : the enmity will ever continue between the two seeds.

3. It is also in regard of power ; but how far this power is destroyed, may refer to the deliverer and the delivered.

1. Christ has merited enough to break Satan's power.

2. When Christians are converted, then Satan's power against them is broken.

3. And especially, when they become entirely sanctified to the Lord.

Why matter of praise ?

1. Because an instance of God's favour.

2. By giving them a capacity to serve God.

3. A right to the blessings of the new covenant.

4. By weak means God brings great things about.

Use.

1. Let us use much prayer, watchfulness, sobriety, and vigilance.

2. What a mercy to be partakers of this privilege : do not lose it.

SERMON XII.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

ROM. viii. 16.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

I. **T**HE nature of this witness of the Spirit.

1. It implies an uncommon powerful witness of divine love in the heart, by which it is raised to holy raptures of heavenly joy and assurance.

2. God can reveal his truth to the mind with such life, and power, and evidence, that the mind cannot dissent from, or refuse to believe it, being so strong and powerful.

3. This immediate assurance was given of old, by visions, voices, and the message of angels. Thus Abraham was assured that God would be his exceeding great reward, Gen. xv. 17. Thus Moses knew he was the friend of God, Exod. xxxiii. 17. Thus Daniel was informed he was greatly beloved, Dan. ix. 33, 10, 11—19. And thus Mary Magdalene was assured that her sins were forgiven. Paul also was assured that he was a chosen vessel; and indeed all the apostles had sufficient evidence of their acceptance.

4. There is no reason to believe that such divine favours are ceased in these gospel days, but rather increased; since *the weakest in that day shall be as the house of David, and the house of David as an angel of God*. The gospel dispensation affords the richest displays of divine grace.

5. Some special seasons may arise, wherein the blessed Spirit may vastly exceed his ordinary operations: as first, when persons are not able to read the holy scriptures, or when the Bible is withheld from them, or when they have enjoyed very poor ministrations of the gospel; then they may enjoy more sensible consolations, or teachings of the Spirit of God.

Secondly, to what glorious degrees of piety and holiness have some persons been raised in a very short time. Thirdly. If we credit accounts given by holy men, we must confess that there have been instances of the most extraordinary consolation bestowed on them, many of whom might be mentioned.

II. The seasons when they have been bestowed.

1. When persons have been called to great and difficult services in the church, and to an uncommon degree of sufferings. St. Paul was in labours more abundant, and in sufferings above measure.

2. When temptations have been extraordinary, and their afflictions above measure, pressing and overwhelming. This the Spirit may see fit to give to such, a divine cordial to keep them from fainting.

3. When christians of the first rank have been warmly engaged in most lively acts of devotion, in fervent and holy prayers; thus they have been apparently near to heaven, and have tasted the joys of the upper world. Daniel had been engaged in prayer one and twenty days, when the angel told him *he was greatly beloved*. Or, the Spirit may see it necessary to uphold weak christians of the lowest rank of understanding, by some extraordinary and immediate possessions of his love.

III. How are these favours distinguished from the delusions of Satan?

1. It fills the soul with great degrees of humility, and self-abasement, under a sense of its own vileness, guilt and unworthiness, as it did Job.

2. By this testimony, the soul is led to a more sensible dependance on divine grace; self-delusion leads us rather to depend on our own attainments, than on these extraordinary helps.

3. This witness greatly establishes the soul in the great leading doctrines of the gospel; particularly, in the faith of Christ. St. Paul was himself wrapped up into the third heavens.

4. By this witness, the heart is drawn out to special degrees of love, and engages in warm and lively thanksgivings for such undeserved favours.

5. It never leaves the soul without awakening the

exercise of such graces as are indeed the sure marks and evidences of the children of God.

III. Wherein the extraordinary appears from the ordinary.

1. The extraordinary is more sensible, and strong upon the soul; but it is usually short and sudden; the other is more durable: this is a cordial; the other more like our common food.

2. The ordinary may be made out by others, but this is only known to ourselves: it is an exceeding great joy, and brings the soul as it were within the confines of heaven.

V. A word of advice concerning this work.

1. Satisfy not yourselves with a slight examination, but renew the work frequently, and search whether you find the same marks and evidences of adoption remaining in you or no.

2. In this examination, keep from carnal self-love. Set yourselves before the bar of conscience, as before the bar of God; and then pass an impartial sentence upon yourself.

3. Trust not merely to your own spirit, without earnest prayer for the assistance of the Spirit of God. The heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it? Jer. xvii. 9.

4. If you find any evidences of adoption, be not discouraged, though you do not find all the characters of grace there; but rest not with one mark only, since the scripture has given so many.

5. If you have not experienced such great things as some have, beware of reproaching and ridiculing these uncommon operations in others: take care of pronouncing them all delusion.

6. Let not humble christians be discouraged, though they have never found this extraordinary witness themselves; it will be found by them who seek it earnestly.

7. Dare not to believe any sudden raptures, unless you find some considerable measure of those sanctified effects above described.

8. Resist not the Spirit in its sanctifying influences, lest he withdraw your comforts of every kind.

9. Wait on God in all his ordinances for this extraordinary witness, as without it no one is safe, happy, or completely ready to die.

SERMON XIII.

THE FLESH AND SPIRIT'S GREAT CONTEST.

GAL. V. 17.

The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary, the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

IT is generally agreed by all thinking men, that man is a compound creature, and that he hourly puts forth such different kinds of action, as one simple being could never perform. Flesh and spirit are the two ingredients that go to the composition; yet they keep their own natures still distinct, unmixed and unfounded.

1. By the flesh we eat, drink, walk, and sleep, and are akin to brute *animals*. By the spirit we think, know, choose, and hold kindred with angels.

2. The flesh, or body, includes the limbs, blood, and breath, with all the grosser parts, and finer materials, solid or fluid, that make up the animal. It has many inward appetites of its own. It has several visible, as well as hidden motions; and it receives various impressions, made by inward objects of sense which are proper to itself, and in which the spirit has no share.

3. The soul, or spirit, includes the understanding and will, which are its chief powers. It has its thoughts, conceptions, judgments, and reasonings. It acts of choice, aversion and desire, in great variety,

and belong not to the flesh. But while we dwell in this world, there is such a near union between soul and body, that there are very few operations and affections of the mind, which do not receive a suitable influence from the qualities, impressions, powers, and passions of flesh and blood.

4. These appetites and affections, which are the mingled operations of flesh and spirit, are either lawful, sacred or sinful; and they are so called, partly according to the different objects of them, and partly according to their various degrees or circumstances of place that may attend them. Thus actions may be lawful, sacred, or sinful, if exercised towards different objects.

It is lawful to be *hungry*, or *thirsty*, and to desire proper food, as bread and wine: but to covet meat or drink, which belong to another man, is sinful. To fear a robber, or a roaring lion, or to love my house, or my servant, are very lawful *affections*: but if my love or fear of any creature exceeds my fear and love of God, it becomes hereby *sinful*. It is lawful, nay, religious to be angry, to hate, and to be ashamed, when sin is the object: but to be ashamed of virtue and religion, or to hate my neighbour, or even mine enemy, or to be angry without a cause, or above a proper degree, are all criminal passions, and make us guilty before God.

I. How the flesh may tempt us to sin.

1. When the scriptures speak of sin in its principles or operations, they use the word *flesh*, *fleshly*, or *carnal*, the *body*, or the *members*, with much *freedom* and *frequency*. St. Peter speaks of walking after the flesh, 2 Pet. ii. 20: of alluring men by the flesh, ii. 18: of fleshly lusts that war against the soul, ii. 11. St. Paul bids us mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 12. He calls the principles of sin, the body of death, vii. 24: he speaks of sin reigning in our mortal bodies, vi. 12; which he calls the law of sin in our members, vii. 23. Particular sins he calls our members, Col. iii. 5. St. James speaks of lusts that war in our members, iv. 1. St. John mentions the lusts of the flesh, 1 John ii. 16. St. Jude, garments spotted by the flesh,

ver. 23. We are also called to crucify the flesh, Gal. v. 24. And St. Paul names adultery, fornication, idolatry, hatred, envy, murder, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, as works of the *flesh*, in several places.

2. The soul itself has some propensity to things forbidden, as well as sinful aversions to God, and things that are holy. There are lusts of the mind, as well as the flesh. The devils, who are not flesh and blood, are vile sinners; called spiritual wickednesses in high places, Eph. vi. 12.

3. There are several other sins, which are numbered among the works of the flesh; such as malice, envy, self-conceit, emulation, and hatred of good men, which are doubtless found in the fallen angels. The springs of sin lying in our natures, may be made yet more evident by the following considerations.

1. How different the sins of some men, according to their *constitutions*. These are called easy-besetting sins, because our temper and constitution are always with us. Those of a sanguine make, are often tempted by the gay scenes of life, to pursue vanity, and to indulge forbidden pleasures; luxury and intemperance are their peculiar vices. Those of melancholy dispositions are inclined to sullen vices, to an unsociable temper, and are often tempted to despair of God's mercies, and to abandon religion. Some have a greediness in their natures, and are inclined to selfish, covetous iniquities. These are often found hard-hearted and uncompassionate to the miseries and necessitous cries of the poor. Others are sour and peevish in their natures, having an excess of sharp juices mixed with their flesh and blood; and are easily awakened to sudden resentment, and kindled into a flame of sinful anger upon the slightest provocation.

2. How many particular sins may we be inclined to, by reason of some sudden distemper of body, or by long and habitual diseases, that attend flesh and blood. When the body is frequently exercised with sharp and tedious pains, even a well tempered man becomes peevish and fretful; he vexes his own soul with impatience, and murmurs against God. This appears partly, if not wholly occasioned by bodily disorders;

for even our natural hunger makes us peevish. When sharp corrosive juices prey upon the stomach for want of food, how fretful does our temper grow, till a good meal provides matter for those digestive juices to act upon: then the flesh grows easy, and the good humour returns. When the natural spirits are reduced very low by long weakness, how cold and inactive are some good men. When phlegmatic humours prevail in the body, how slothful are some christians in every duty; how backward to active services.

When through distemper of body, black and melancholy juices get the ascendant over the more sprightly animal powers, how often do we find persons of a sweet affable behaviour grow sullen and unsociable. When the powers of nature are broken by continual diseases, the man of courage becomes fearful, and starts aside from duty at every appearing difficulty. The man of faith gives into fears and doubts, to perpetual unbelieving and suspicious thoughts with regard to the promises of God, and all the encouragements of the gospel; nay, when even health returns, the very same persons will greatly alter.

3. How different are the sins of youth and old age. The young delight themselves in gay company, public vanities, sensual amusements, luxury, and profuseness; and contemn ease, to pursue with labour the gratifications of fancy and wanton appetite; and hereby neglect all the duties of *retirement* and *thoughtfulness*.

The old, love ease and money, neglect and despise the pleasures of the flesh, and gay diversions; but daily hoard up gold for fear of want, and waste those hours in counting their money, which they should spend in a preparation for death. The former fear nothing; the latter fear every thing. The unholy soul is too easily influenced by these extremes, and the soul that is sanctified finds it hard work to resist.

4. How great a part of the sins of mankind arise from the presence of tempting sensible objects. The presence of alluring temptations strikes strongly on the outward organ of the sense, awakens the carnal appetite, and with a powerful, unhappy, and almost

constraining force, persuades the soul to guilty practices and enjoyments. Particular circumstances of time and place, where sensual temptations attend us, become unholy occasions of defiling the soul. And where is the time or place, in which such objects are not to be found? The day-light, the dark night, a wanton song, an immodest touch, the scent of dainty meats, the relish of delicious wines, are all sufficient to provoke the fleshly appetites, and to inflame the soul to the pursuit of iniquity. Not the board, nor the bed, nor the shop, nor the exchange; no, nor the closet, nor the temple of worship, are secure from temptations that assault the soul by means of this wretched flesh. On this account, our Lord gives the following advice: "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, &c."

5. Most of the temptations that we meet with, even when the outward actions are absent, arise from the images of them remaining in the brain. The traces of past sensations are linked together by unperceived ties, so that when once awakened, the whole train of images appear at once.

6. How many iniquities we commit, which in this outward appearance are very nearly imitated by brute creatures, which have no rational soul; whose blood is the very soul, spirit, and life of them. Lev. xvii. 14. Eccles. iii. 21.

7. The soul is at first tainted, corrupted, and defiled with original sin, by its union with *sinful flesh*! When the infant body is formed, so as to become fit for union with a rational soul, the soul comes into existence in union with the body, by the original law of creation, and becomes a part of the man.

II. How we may resist the motions of the flesh.

The Papists require abstinence from meats, and forbid to marry, without due attention to times, places, and persons. At other times they wore *sackcloth*, scourged and whipped themselves, and laid the body under painful *discipline*, in order to mortify sin: but God never required us to break the sixth command in order to keep the seventh.

Protestants run into another extreme; they neglect

the restraints of the flesh, because their religion is spiritual; thinking to secure themselves from sin, merely by the exercise of the mind, without due regard to the body; thinking this is too legal a way. But in opposition to these two extremes, the scriptures direct us to a middle path.

1. Never dare to indulge the craving flesh in any one sinful appetite or inclination; much less make provision for it, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Rom. xiii. 14.

2. Keep out of the way of *temptation*. Whatever place, company, diversion, or unnecessary business you have found to provoke a corrupt passion, avoid it as much as possible. Prov. v. 8. Come not nigh her door.

3. Deny the flesh sometimes in its lawful desires and appetites, to teach it subjection; and let it learn to be governed, by being sometimes restrained, that it may with more ease be withheld when lawful objects appear.

4. Keep the body in such subjection, as to render it fit for the present duty. If excess of faintness and feeble spirits make it unfit for service, refresh it with the proper comforts of life.

5. If, through excess of strength and vigour, the body grows unfit for the duties of religion, it may be kept under by diligence in labour, spare diet, and diminishing the hours of sleep. The danger of Sodom was plenty and luxury, which the scriptures describe by fulness of bread, joined with abundance of idleness. Exod. xvi. 49. On this account, fasting is joined with prayer.

6. If desires of the body awaken the passions or appetites more than ordinary, seek relief from a physician, to restore the flesh to its best state of service to the soul, that both body and soul may glorify thy Maker.

7. Never imagine that these, or any other methods of mortification, will be effectual to suppress and cure one sin, without converting and renewing grace. To be sanctified and fully saved, is the sure way to holiness and heaven.

SERMON XIV.

THE USES OF LAW AND GOSPEL.

GAL. iii. 21, 22.

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

1. **T**HE Galatians, who had been converted to the faith of Christ, were beset by some zealous Judaizing Christians, who would fain have had them circumcised, and engage to keep the Jewish law. Chap. vi. 12. But the apostle guards them against complying with the ceremonious bondage.

2. He shews in this chapter, that the promise was given to Abraham, and to all them who imitate his faith, by trusting to the gospel of the Son of God.

I. What is meant by the law in general?

1. A law is the will of a superior, signified to us, and laid within the reach of our knowledge; which, if we disobey, we are guilty, and are laid under the sentence of condemnation.

2. It requires perfect obedience without defect, personally performed to the end of our lives. It accepts of no less than it requires; nor does it own any thing for righteous, which is not perfect. Rom. ii. 7.

II. What is this promise?

1. That all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him, and that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude. Thus the gospel salvation was contained in the promise given to Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

2. It is called the promise, to distinguish it from the law of Sinai. The gospel does not save us in the

way of a law, and therefore it is not like a legal precept.

III. What by the law's giving life?

1. The word giving life, signifies quickening, or bringing a dead thing into life, by putting life into it, or by making it active in a vital manner.

2. The context constrains us to construe it, the giving a title to eternal life and happiness in a judicial, or in a legal manner. This no law of God can do.

IV. What is meant by righteousness?

1. A justifying righteousness, or a sentence of justification, a rectitude in the court of God, a freedom from punishment, and a right to eternal life, which is the proper effect of perfect obedience to any law of God given to man.

2. But this blessing may be given in another way, by the free grace of God, without any such obedience.

V. What is that promise given by the faith of Christ to all them that believe?

1. The promise of salvation and the inheritance of heaven, typified by the land of Canaan, given originally to Abraham, and his seed, and to all his spiritual seed.

2. As we are imitators of his faith, so we are invested in his benefits. As Abraham was made a child of God by trusting in the ancient promise; so we are made the children of God, by trusting in Jesus Christ the Messiah; as,

1. There is a harmony between the several relations of God to man. The law and gospel, the precept and promise, cannot contradict one another; for they both run through all the different dispensations that ever God gave to man.

2. The law and gospel cannot contradict one another; for they are two discoveries of the will of God for very different purposes. The law was given since man's fall, for the discovery and conviction of sin, to shew men their duty, and how exceeding sinful their natures are; how unable to perform their duty, and also lay them under a sense of guilt and condemnation. The gospel was given for the relief of guilty men, whom the law had condemned; and to provide

righteousness or justification, and life, for them, who, according to the law, had the sentence of death passed upon them. The law is the ministration of condemnation; the gospel is the ministration of righteousness.

3. Was not the law ordained for life? Rom. vii. 10. It was only ordained to give life and happiness to every one that perfectly fulfilled it. Rom. ii. 7, 10, 15. The law entered, that sin might appear to abound. By the law is the knowledge of sin.

4. Were none of the Jews saved to whom the law was given? They were all condemned by this law in the sight of God, and conscience; but several of them were saved by the promise made to Abraham, or by virtue of the gospel, which was contained in the five books of Moses, and was often intermingled with the declarations of the law.

5. Why cannot the law justify the creature? 1. Because all our repentance, or new endeavours after obedience, cannot make atonement for sins that are past. 2. Because even our repentance, prayers, and obedience, are all defective.

6. Is God righteous in giving man a law which he cannot fulfil? It was righteous to give innocent man a law, which at first he was able to fulfil; and this law continues in its force and demands, though man has lost his innocence, and by his wilful crimes has rendered himself unable to fulfil this law. His rendering himself unable to keep his Maker's law, doth not make void the law itself. Though man hath weakened himself by his fall, he hath not utterly lost his natural powers of obeying the law.

Man, who is condemned by the law, may be saved by the gospel; therefore the way of obtaining an interest in these promised blessings, is through faith in Christ.

7. Doth the gospel justify a man that regards not the law? It is the design of the gospel to restore us to holiness as well as happiness. Believers are under the law as a rule of government.

The gospel gives us strength to fulfil the duties of the

law, and engages us to serve a reconciled God, which the broken law could not do.

SERMON XV.

ON LUKEWARMNESS IN RELIGION.

REV. iii. 15, 16.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

THE soul is so active, it cannot be idle : yea, and if we look around us, all is life and activity about us.

2. What labour, toil, noise, and hurry, about the necessities of life—about the riches, honours, and pleasures of it.

3. Here there is no indifference, but all are in earnest, eagerly striving for earthly, transitory delights.

4. Should not christians strive more earnestly for eternal, than others do for external things ?

5. Here and there you may see one act, as if they looked on religion as the most interesting thing on earth : but as to the generality of professors, they are very indifferent about it ; or, as mentioned in the text, they are lukewarm, and neither *hot* nor *cold*.

I. An awful threatening: *I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

1. This has long been executed on the Laodicean church, which is now no more than a mungrel race of Pagans and Mahometans, where Christ's name is not so much as heard.

2. But though this church has been gone hundreds of years, that lukewarmness of spirit which brought this judgment upon them, is still alive, and too much possesses professing christians of this day.

3. We have many awful threatenings of this sort in the book of God: as, *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone—Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?—and nigh unto cursing, ready to be burned.*

II. Christ's friendly warning, to escape this dangerous state.

1. *I know thy works*; viz. I, knowing all things, cannot be deceived, or imposed upon by an empty profession; as, *I search the heart, and try the reins. Be not deceived, for God is not mocked.*

2. *Thou art neither cold nor hot.* A very bad state; and Christ reproves her with very great severity. Yet she was not charged with gross immoralities, such as fornication, idolatry, or with things sacrificed to idols. She was also free from the Nicolaitian heresy, the community of wives.

3. What then is her charge? It is a subtle wickedness, with no shocking appearance, which makes no great blemish in the view of others, and may even escape our own notice; and that is *lukewarmness*, the being *neither hot nor cold*. Thou dost not renounce religion, and openly disregard it; but thou dost not make it thy business, thy great concern. Thou hast a form of godliness, but no power: thy religion is dull, languid, and cold; thy heart is not in it; it is not animated with fervour of spirit. Thou art not cold, like a profligate; nor fired, like a seraph; but keepest in a medium state between both. Lukewarmness partakes both of heat and cold.

4. Lukewarmness is such an inconsistent thing, that it is really worse than avowed impiety, or a professed rejection of the gospel and religion altogether. Any thing is better than lukewarmness.

5. If you looked on religion as a cheat, and openly rejected the profession of it, you would be careless, and disregard it by practice, and shew what you were. But to own it true, and yet be indifferent about it, this is the most absurd conduct that can be conceived.

But, if religion be a reality, it is the most important interest in the world, and requires the utmost exertion of all our powers.

III. Christ's abhorrence of this lukewarm state.

1. *I would thou wert cold or hot.* Not that coldness in religion is equally acceptable with fervour; but that Christ shews here, how odious and abominable lukewarmness was to him. As if he should say, "Your state is so bad, you can hardly change for the worse; I would you were any thing but what you are."

2. The lukewarm professor has a corrupt heart, as well as the avowed sinner; therefore both are hateful in the sight of God, and both in a state of condemnation.

IV. Aggravations peculiar to lukewarm professors.

1. They add the sin of an hypocritical profession to their other sins: they seem to be what they are not.

2. They are guilty of presumption, pride, and self-flattery; imagining themselves in a safe state when they are not.

3. Their state is the more dangerous, not being so liable to conviction, or to be brought to repentance.

4. God's honour, and religion, is more injured by lukewarm professors, than by profane sinners, with whom his honour has no connection. This is the reason why he says, "he will spue them out of his mouth."

V. Exhort to warmth and fervour in religion.

1. If there be a God, he is so glorious and lovely, that nothing can be so important as his favour.

2. If Christ be our Saviour, let our service be lively; he demands our warmest love and affection.

3. If he be our Lawgiver and Judge, let us serve him with reverence and with godly fear.

4. If heaven, hell, and judgment to come, be realities, they are certainly the most awful realities in the world.

5. If prayer and other religious duties be necessary, they require all the vigour of our souls.

6. If there be a life hereafter, these objects should call forth all the powers both of soul and body.

SERMON XVI.

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE AND DEPENDANCE.

ROM. xiv. 7, 8.

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: whether we die, we die unto the Lord.

1. **I**T appears from this chapter, that warm debates had arisen between the Jewish and Gentile converts, about the difference of meats and days established by the Mosaic law.

2. The Gentiles being under no bias from the prejudice of education and custom, were easier convinced of their freedom from that yoke of bondage, and despised the Jews as weak and scrupulous to a fault.

3. St. Paul therefore recommends moderation to both, and assigns this as the reason, that they are *the servants of the Lord*. This being admitted, their personal censures will necessarily be milder.

5. Thus, while our text affords a convincing argument for moderation in judging of other christians, who differ from us in circumstantialia, it teaches us what should be the principle and end of our life; and that both negatively and positively, we should not live to ourselves, but to the Lord.

I. Why should we not live to ourselves?

1. We are not absolutely our own, and therefore have no right to dispose of ourselves; for since we could not give ourselves existence, neither could we design ourselves for any end or purpose of our own:

therefore neither our passions, appetites, nor our reason, is our law ; but the revealed will of God.

2. We have neither liberty nor authority to employ either body or mind, at pleasure, as if we originally designed their use : therefore we should neither spend our time, nor waste our strength, but according to the will of God.

3. Our tongues, lips, and even our very thoughts, should be confined to proper limits, in matters the most useful and important.

4. Our attainments, either in learning or grace, should not terminate in ourselves, but be devoted to the service of God, and our generation. Has God blessed our endeavours ? Give him the praise, and let it stimulate to greater action.

5. Since we are not the author of our lives, we can have no right to take them away. We can neither determine the time, nor what kind of death, any more than ward off, or suspend its blow, when commissioned to destroy : therefore we must wait till our change comes.

II. How should we live to the Lord ?

1. This we are unable to do by nature ; as such, a real, as well as a relative change, is necessary, to enable us to live to him that made and died for us.

2. This supposes our dependance upon him, devoting ourselves entirely to his service, without reserve or hesitation, *avouching the Lord to be our God* : yea, to bind ourselves in covenant to be the Lord's for ever.

3. Being his servants, we should shew all good fidelity, and employ all our time and talents to promote his glory.

4. As he is our King, it becomes us to give the most ready and cheerful obedience to his commands, and submit to all his disposals.

Use.

1. Be conscious of our neglecting his service, and in every respect behaving ourselves ungratefully and undutifully.

2. Such a life is worthy of God, and our own existence. He who is the beginning, should always be the end.

3. Such a life as this, is our own happiness ; for acting as prescribed, we move in our own sphere, and rightly tend to our own centre.

SERMON XVII.

THE ADVANTAGE OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS.

LUKE XVI. 31.

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

1. **T**HIS text seems a parabolical dialogue between Abraham and one of his wretched posterity, once rolling in luxuries of high life, but now tormented in hell flames.

2. We read of his brethren in his father's house, among whom most likely his estate was divided, upon his decease : from whence we infer, that he had no children ; as, if he had, he might have been more solicitous for them than his brethren. He seems like some unhappy rake, to have just come to his estate, and to have given himself up wholly to pleasure and debaucheries, which shattered his constitution, and brought him to the grave, and alas ! to hell, in the bloom of life, when very far from his thoughts !

3. Whether from some remaining affection to his brethren, or for fear of them, who had shared in sin with him, by coming there would increase his torment, is not certain ; but he was solicitous that Lazarus might be as an apostle from the dead to warn them : but his petition was rejected.

4. Although I cannot procure even a drop of water to cool my parched tongue, yet since I have five brethren at home, within the reach of mercy, and who may be rioting in those riches I was forced to leave ;

who are now treading the enchanted paths I was obliged to leave, and who will, unless reclaimed, soon descend, like me, thoughtless and unprepared into these doleful regions: I therefore pray thee send Lazarus to alarm them in their mad career, with an account of my dreadful doom, and inform them of the reality of my state of endless misery, that they may reform, and so avoid this place of torment, whence I can never escape.

5. Abraham's anger seems to be raised: "If thy brothers perish, it will not be for want of means, having the scriptures of the Old and New Testament written by Moses and the prophets, these are sufficient to inform their judgment, and regulate their practice, and to warn them of everlasting punishment."

6. To this the wretched creature replies, "Nay, father Abraham, these means will not avail: I enjoyed them all, and yet here I am, a lost soul, therefore I am afraid they will have no more effect on them, than they had on me. These means are common and familiar, and therefore disregarded: but if an apostle from the dead was sent, as an eye-witness of these awful things he had seen, surely they would then repent: the novelty and terror of an apparition would alarm them."—Thus the miserable creature pleads; but, alas, all in vain!

7. Abraham continues inexorable, and gives a very good reason for his denial: for if they pay no attention to the standing revelation of God in the church, it would be to no purpose to give them another. The same dispositions as make them deaf to *Moses and the prophets*, would render a messenger from the dead of no avail whatsoever. This might strike them with a panic, but it would soon be over, and then they would think no more about it. If one did go, they would but declare the same things, and could not speak with greater authority, or give better credentials; and therefore all who would not benefit by standing means, must be given up; and God, for good reasons, will not multiply new revelations.

8. This answer was fully exemplified when another Lazarus was raised by Christ, in the very sight of the

Jews ; and yet after all they were not persuaded, but persisted in invincible *ignorance*. This parable was spoken before any of the New Testament was written, and added to the sacred canon ; and it might be then asserted, that then the standing will of God was sufficient, and needless to demand any further : much more now, when the canon of scripture is complete, by the addition of the New Testament.

I. Shew the sufficiency of the standing revelation of God's will in the scriptures, to bring men to repentance.

Religion cannot consist without right notions of God and divine things ; it brings to light things which our feeble reason could never have discovered, without the help of a supernatural revelation ; and which things are of the utmost importance for us to know.

1. The scriptures give us the clearest account of the nature and perfections of the Deity, and of his being the Creator, Preserver, Ruler, and Benefactor of the whole universe.

2. In the scriptures we have a clear account of the present state of human nature, as degenerate ; and a more rational account of the manner of its apostacy, than could ever be given by the light of nature.

3. Here also we have the welcome account of the method of recovery from the ruins of our apostacy, through the mediation of the Son of God. There we have the assurance which we could find no where else, that God is reconcileable, and willing to pardon penitents upon the account of the obedience and sufferings of Christ.

4. In the scriptures also, we have eternity and the invisible world laid open to our view, and life and immortality brought to light by the gospel.

5. The holy scriptures give us complete directions in matters of practice, or are a sufficient rule of life. The sacred writings also give us a complete system of practical religion and morality, and recommend these instructions, which are doctrinal and practical, so that they are plain and obvious to common sense.

6. These scriptures are attended and attested with all that sufficient evidence of intrinsic and extrinsic

evidence, that the nature of the thing will admit, such as both the evidences of prophecy and miracles ; which must be allowed incontestable proofs.

II. Expose the vanity of objecting to the christian religion, or of demanding another.

1. Infidels seldom offer any greater objections against the gospel, than a laugh, a sneer, a pert witticism ; but these will not banter us out of our joyful confidence of the divinity of the religion of Christ, nor will they suffice to indemnify them.

2. Will they say that the christian religion is mysterious, and cannot be comprehended ; as is the case with the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation and satisfaction made by Christ, &c. : but will pretend to comprehend the infinite God in their finite minds.

3. Do they contend, that those are very obscure passages in scripture, the meaning and propriety of which they do not see ? And are there not many strange things in the book of nature, and the administrations of Providence ? A revelation which we could fully understand, would not appear the production of Jehovah.

4. Will they object the wicked lives of its professors against the holiness and good tendency of christianity itself ? But it is not christianity as practised in the world, but as taught in the Bible, I am contending for : or, do men grow better by renouncing christianity ? Observation proves the contrary.

5. Will they urge, that christianity bears too hard on the pleasures of mankind, and lays them under too severe restraints, or that its penalties are excessive and hard, or cruel ? But does it rob mankind of any pleasure worthy of creatures formed for immortality, and consistent with their good ? It restrains them as a physician restrains his patients from poison, or improper regimen ; it restores men from living like brutes, viz. from those pleasures that would ruin their souls ; it restrains them from gratifying a private passion at the expence of the public.—Will they object, that miracles are not a sufficient evidence of the truth and

divinity of revelation, because infernal spirits may also work miracles, as the magicians of Egypt, to confirm an impostor? But it is known, that free-thinkers explode and laugh at the existence and power of evil spirits in other cases, and therefore must not be allowed to admit them in this case.

7. Or will our infidels insist to be eye-witnesses of these things, and must one arise from the dead, or new miracles be wrought to convince them by ocular demonstration? This is a most unreasonable demand.

REFLECTIONS.

1. If the religion of Christ be attested with such full evidence, and be sufficient to conduct men to everlasting felicity, then how helpless are they who enjoyed it all their life without profit; who either reject it as false, or have not felt its power? It is the last remedy provided for a guilty world; and if this fails, their disease is incurable, and they are not to expect better means.

2. If Christ's religion be true, then happy those whose hearts and lives are habitually conformed to it, and have ventured their everlasting all upon it. You build on a sure foundation, and your hope shall not fail you.

3. If Christ's religion be true, then woe to all the wicked: woe to infidels, both speculative and practical; for all the curses in the book of God are in full force against them.

4. Let all strive to become rational and practical believers of this heaven-born religion. Let our understandings fully comprehend the truth, and our lives be conformed to its purity; and ere long we shall receive those glorious rewards it ensures to all eternity.

SERMON XVIII.

THE RICH MAN AND THE BEGGAR.

LUKE xvi. 19—31.

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, &c. &c.

1. CHRIST knowing the Pharisees to have a form of godliness, and yet to be lovers of this world, shews the impossibility of serving God and mammon.

2. These sayings gave the greatest offence; for having heard these things, they derided him. And why? Because they were lovers of money.

3. In this practice they endeavoured to justify themselves, and make it appear that they could serve two masters of opposite interests, with equal zeal and affection.

4. In this they too much succeeded; for by being conformed to the letter of the law, the people not only considered them as saints, but had them in high estimation.

5. Christ therefore, to confound these lovers of (money or) mammon, introduces the history recorded in the text.

I. Is this a parable or a real history?

1. This inquiry seems the more necessary, because the circumstances are more distinctly marked in this, than they are in any parable, however the connecting circumstances may require it.

2. Some say it is a *parable*, because they are not willing that any of the facts in it should be literally understood.

3. Of all the modes of interpreting the sacred writings, the allegorical and metaphorical appear the most exceptionable and dangerous; and for the purposes of

general edification, the literal method is undoubtedly the best. The literal meaning should not be departed from, except when a metaphorical is evident, and a spiritual sense plainly indicated.

4. If this passage be a *parable*, it is a representation of what may be ; for *parable* signifies a *near representation of the truth*. If it be a *real history*, it is a description of what has been. Either a man may live as is here described, and go to perdition when he dies, (and so the parable proves the possibility of the thing) or, some *have* lived in this way, and are now suffering the torments of an eternal fire. The account is equally instructive in whatever of these lights it is viewed.

II. Why was the rich man's soul sent to perdition ?

1. Christ could have mentioned the rich man's name as well as that of the beggar ; but as it might give offence, he with delicacy passes it by.

2. He was rich ; and as this stands among the number of his vices, we should know what is meant by it. Riches are opposed to poverty, which signifies to be destitute of the necessities, conveniences, and comforts of life : all who possess these, may be called rich men. By necessities of life, we mean a sufficiency of nourishing *meat*, *drink*, and *clothing*, suited to the body and climate. By conveniences of life, a proper *habitation*, decent *furniture*, and suitable *attendance*. By the *comforts* of life, what pleases the eye, and gratifies those reasonable desires which promote the health of the body, preserve it in vigour, and prolong the life. Yet a man may possess all these, and not think himself rich.

3. He was clothed in purple and *fine linen*. Purple, says Pliny, is a species of marine shell-fish, which has a white vein between its jaws, in which a small portion of that precious liquor is contained, which was made use of to dye garments. This shell-fish was found in Tyre. Also of *fine linen*, a species of fine flax that grew about Elis in Achaia, and was reckoned as precious as gold, a scruple being worth two shillings and sixpence. And while thus clothed, perhaps felt

little concerned for those who were destitute of necessary clothing.

4. He fared sumptuously every day, viz. had daily splendid feasts, accompanied with great hilarity; it seems he kept not only a good table, but had constant companions in his daily festivities. In the sight of God he was culpable, as he sought his happiness in this life only, in the gratification of animal desires. He made no provision for the soul, but lived to the world.

5. Lazarus's character was good, and his end was glorious; but he was destitute of all assistance, although he stood high in the favour of God. He was laid at the rich man's gate, full of sores, so as to feel constant pain, and could not change his posture without the aid of others.

6. *He desired to be fed with crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.* He only desired the fragments which were left; but it seems he was not gratified.

7. *The dogs came and licked his sores.* This was some sort of alleviation of his affliction. The tongue of a dog to obstinate ulcers is considered a sovereign remedy.

8. *It came to pass the beggar died.* As he suffered greatly, so his sufferings were short. When death was finished life began, for he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and placed very near him.

III. What the rich man's punishment. Of the last days of this man no more is said than this, *the rich man died, and was buried.* Death must separate the soul from the body.

1. *He sees Lazarus, clothed with glory and immortality.* What a contrast! What desires to resemble him, and what rage and despair because he is not like him.

2. He appears either to desire good, or else to have his miseries alleviated, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me.* Once he might have prayed to the God of Abraham, but now it was over. We have this one instance only of praying to saints. He appears to have been tormented with the sight of the happiness of the just, as well as his own misery.

3. *Son, remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst*

thy good things. The good things once possessed, together with the recollection of grace offered or abused, will increase hell's torments.

4. *I am tormented in this flame.* The torments endured in hell fire will form, through all eternity, a continual source of indescribable woe.

5. *There is a great gulf fixed.* The damned never can be delivered from this place of torment; there never can be any intercourse, being shut out for ever from the possibility of suffering; the righteous will be safely and immutably fixed in their state. Their persons as well as their places will also be separated.

6. The recollection that their example and influence have brought others to the same place, will greatly torment them.

Use.

1. The rich and poor must meet together at the great day.

2. The end of the good things of the bad, and of the bad things of the good is at hand.

3. Riches usually are a great snare to the owners.

4. They who live in pleasure are dead while they live.

5. However innocent and good men are, God must be their portion.

6. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

7. When men die their state is forever fixed.

SERMON XIX.

THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS.

HEB. xii. 14.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

I. EXPLAIN its nature.

1. Inherent holiness is a conformity of heart and life to the revealed will of God. His holiness is the standard of ours. We may be said to be holy, when his image is stamped upon our hearts, and reflected in our lives; so that St. Paul saith, *that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*, Ephes. iv. 24.

2. His revealed will comprises both the law and the gospel. The law shews our duty to God as our Creator and Benefactor, and to men as our fellow creatures; and the gospel informs us of the duty which, as sinners, we owe to God, as reconcileable through a mediator. Our obedience to the former implies the whole of morality, and the latter the whole of evangelical graces, as repentance, faith, love, &c. The one shews the necessity of holiness, and the other, that those who are thus holy, are prepared for the visions of God.

II. Marks of true holiness.

1. To delight ourselves in God. This is connatural to the renewed only, and argues a conformity to his image; every nature is most agreeable to itself.

2. Holiness consists in a hearty complacence in the law of God, because of its purity. The law is the transcript of the moral perfections of God, and if we love the original, we shall love the copy. We love it, because it illustrates the moral perfections of the Deity, and discovers the beauties of holiness, without which ours could not be secured.

4. The grand spring of holiness, is the satisfaction of

divine justice by the obedience and death of Christ, and the sanctification of sinners by the Holy Ghost ; the first was necessary to enjoy God, and the second is necessary to maintain intimate communion with him. These are its articles.

5. Holiness consists in an habitual delight in all the duties of holiness towards God and man, and an earnest desire for communion with God in them. This is the natural result of all the foregoing particulars.

6. Sanctified souls enjoy a divine freedom in religious duties, and receive communications of grace from heaven, and find their graces quickened. Psalm xlii. 1, 2.

7. To shew we are holy, there must be universal holiness in practice. This is generally considered as the grand characteristic of real religion, without which all pretensions to it are vain, 1 Cor. iii. 10.

8. All that are holy, do not live habitually in any known sin, or wilfully neglect any known duty, Psalm cxix. 6. without this none shall see the Lord.

II. The endeavours we should use to obtain holiness.

1. We should endeavour to know whether we are holy or not, by a close examination ; without this, we should act like a physician that applies medicines at random, without even knowing the disease.

2. If we find the fore-mentioned marks, let not an excessive scrupulosity frighten us from drawing the happy conclusion ; and if we do not, let us exercise severity against ourselves.

3. Let us awake, arise, and betake ourselves in earnest to all the means of grace ; as herein our eternal all is concerned, it calls for all our earnestness.

4. If we meditate and converse with ourselves in retirement, and live not strangers to ourselves.

5. Read the word with attention and self-application, and also attend the word preached, not as a trifler, but as one that sees his eternal all concerned. Shun the tents of sin, and associate with those who have the change you want, and who can give you proper directions.

6. Prostrate yourselves before the Lord, confess your sins, implore his mercy, cry mightily to God, and give

him no rest till your importunity prevail, and you take the kingdom of heaven by violence.

III. The necessity of this holiness.

1. This appears from the unchangeable appointment of God, in excluding all the unholy from the kingdom of heaven, 1 Cor. ix. 6.

2. Unholy persons can receive no happiness from the employments and entertainments of the heavenly world.

3. The felicity of that state consists in the contemplation of the divine perfections, and these displays in the works of creation, providence, and redemption; hence it is called a seeing the Lord, Matt. v. 18.

4. If we do not place our supreme happiness in Christ and heaven, we cannot be happy hereafter; for there will be no change in disposition in a future state. Either heaven or the sinner must be changed, before he can be happy there.

Use.

1. How absolutely necessary is real holiness.
2. If we do not see God we shall never see good.
3. At death we are cut off from all earthly enjoyments.



SERMON XX.

THE CENTURION'S FAITH.

MATT. viii. 5—10.

Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

I. **W**HY did Christ wonder at the Centurion's faith?

1. He owned it great! he had not found faith so

mature, no, not in Israel, as in this *heathen military man*.

2. Christ *marvelled*, or *wondered* ! Wonder is sometimes the effect of *ignorance*; but at other times, we wonder at things *strange* and *unusual*, though not ignorant of them.

3. This man was a Roman Gentile heathen, who had got some knowledge of the true God; and, though not a proselyte, yet the Jews said, "He loved their nation, and had built them a synagogue." Luke vii. 5.

4. The errand that brought him to Christ, his great care of his servant, and his looking out for a cure for him.

II. His faith, and wherein did the greatness of it lay ?

1. The nature of his faith was a firm persuasion that all *power* and *authority* was vested in Christ, and that he could do whatsoever he pleased.

2. The great end Christ had in all his miracles, was, to discover himself to be the Son of God, the true *Messiah*, and the Saviour of the world.

3. Grant but this truth, that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and all others will follow, viz. that we must obey his laws, depend on his promises, use his power, and trust ourselves in his hands, who is sufficient for all things.

III. How was this faith wrought in him ?

1. The ground of it was laid in his knowledge of God, and also the scriptures of the Old Testament.

2. He had heard of Christ's *doctrines* and *miracles*, and especially of his curing the *leper*, which was public, Matt. viii. 4. And also of the recovery of the Ruler's son, John iv. 46.

3. The Spirit of God can, and often does bless slender means and motives to a willing heart; and sincere and simple souls believe sooner and easier than others.

4. Thus the Spirit of God blessed the knowledge of this Centurion, and the rumours that were brought to him of Christ's doctrines and miracles.

IV. The fruits of this faith, and how it discovered itself ?

1. He directly applied himself to Christ. Faith al-

ways brings us to Christ, either through necessity or delight.

2. Misery was an object proper for mercy to work upon: "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." What can bring us to Christ, but a knowledge of our sins and sicknesses. Justice considers what is *deserved*, but mercy what is *desired* and *wanted*.

3. Christ offered to heal him, verse 8, "*I will come and heal him.*" A sound believer hath an high opinion of Christ, and a low opinion of self. The Centurion said, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.*

4. The Centurion is content with Christ's word, without his bodily presence: *Speak but the word.* Christ's word is enough to believers, because it is a word of power and blessing.



SERMON XXI.

THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN'S FAITH.

MATT. xv. 21—28.

O woman! great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt: and her daughter was made whole from that hour.

1. **I**N the Centurion we had an instance of a reasoning faith; in the woman of Canaan of a wrestling faith.

2. Christ said it was *great faith*, wrestling through great *discouragements*, and it failed not of great *success*; "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." When faith is sufficiently strong, Christ can hold out no longer.

I. Consider the quality of the woman.

1. She is called a woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. 22.

By nation, a Phenician, or Syrophenician, Mark vii. 26. By religion, a Greek, viz. a devout woman among the Gentiles, bordering upon the people of God.

2. She appears to be a believer by her coming to Christ to cure her daughter, who was bodily vexed with the devil.

3. She had heard of Christ, Mark vii. 25, viz. by the rumour of his *miracles*. If God blessed the fame of miracles, we may be ashamed that we no more improve by his word.

4. She gave him the title of the *Son of David*, the solemn name of the promised Messiah, because he was to be born of the *seed of David*.

5. In faith there is knowledge, assent, and affiance ; all these were in this woman—knowledge of him, assent to him, and affiance in him.

II. The greatness and strength of her faith. Consider her trials and temptations—Her victory over them—Her importunity, humility, and her resolute confidence.

1. Her temptations were four : Christ's *silence—he answered not a word*. The *coldness of the disciples—send her away*. Christ's answer—*I am not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel*. Christ's apparent contempt—it is not meet to take the children's bread and to give it to dogs. But notwithstanding these repulses, she still kept begging till he gave her satisfaction. God's delays should increase our faith and fervour.

2. Her victory over these temptations by her importunity ; she would not be beat off by Christ's silence, but even makes some advantage of it. *Lord help me*. Her necessity and God's goodness should quicken our prayers.

3. By humility ; we find no murmuring, no impatience or discontent at Christ's carriage. We must wrestle, both with prayers, tears, and a broken heart.

4. Her resolute faith, apparent neglect, and seeming disrespect, must not discourage the coming sinner.

III. Grounds of encouragement.

1. God's providence never gives his word the lie.

2. There is more good will in Christ in reality than in appearance.

3. He rebuked her as a dog, when he meant to heal her as a daughter of Abraham.

4. When he seems to resist, he gives strength to prevail.

Use.

1. Labour for this wrestling faith.

2. In great straits plead the Lord's covenant.

3. It is importunity, humility, and resolute confidence that will do good, and prevail at the last.

SERMON XXII.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN'S INQUIRY.

MARK X. 17.

Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

THE time when this question was put, was, *when Christ was gone forth into the way.*

2. The person that put the question was a *young man*. He was *young, rich, a Pharisee, and a chief ruler.*

3. The manner of his address was, *he ran and kneeled down.* He was *zealous, respectful, earnest, and humble.*

4. The question he asked was, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* It was *important, necessary, serious, and weighty.*

Here is a young rich nobleman, troubled about salvation, who seems to forget his dignity; he comes running to Christ, kneels to him, and puts a very serious question; yet it seems he came short, for when he heard Christ's terms he went away sorrowful.

I. What was commendable in this young man?

1. The question he asked; it was a necessary and

serious one. It was not like Peter, about some other, as, *What shall this man do?* but, *What shall I do?*

2. It was not a foolish curious question; they that are heart-whole will argue and dispute about unprofitable points, not necessary to salvation.

3. It was not about the body, but the soul. This question was not about any thing in this world; but, how he should save his soul and live with God for ever.

4. The question was seriously put, not in jest, but in the greatest earnestness. When men see things real, they think and talk like men of another world.

5. How much better are practical than mere speculative questions, spiritual than temporal questions. Questions about the soul are far better than those about the body.

II. The quality of the person who put this question.

1. A young nobleman, not thirty years of age; when men are usually most vain and foppish. Young men are mostly inclined to liberty, prodigality, and carnal pleasure.

2. In the prime of life, and in the flower of his days, when his wit was bright, his ears quick, his eyes good, his body strong, and his affections warm. How good it is to give the first fruits to God, Lev. ii. 14. Under the law, all sacrifices were offered when the creature was young and strong.

3. When fraught with advantages. The sooner the easier, the longer the more difficult. Sin grows stronger by custom, Jer. xiii. 27. When diseases grow inveterate, medicines do very little good.

4. You thereby provide for old age. To serve God in our good days, is the way for God to help us in our evil days, wherein there is no pleasure; you will not then grieve that you were acquainted with God when young.

5. He was rich and had great possessions. How common is it for rich men to quench both their own reason and the Spirit's operations, by carnal and sensual delights. But this rich man thought of a world to come.

6. He was a ruler, not an obscure vulgar mechanic, but a man of eminence and authority. Men of this

rank usually seek to increase their estates and honour in the world.

7. This man, though a chief nobleman, comes with a case of conscience to Christ, and openly asks, *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

III. The manner of the young man's address.

1. It was voluntary, he came of himself; he was not driven by afflictions, or by bodily necessity: nothing but a satisfaction to his scruples brought him to Christ. *What shall I do?* was his sincere language.

2. It was earnest, he came running; he does not walk in state, but runs after Christ to meet him; he earnestly wished to confer with Christ.

3. He was humble and reverent—he kneeled to Christ. This civil honour shewed he viewed him as an eminent prophet and teacher—a man of God.

4. His compilation, *Good Master*; he came not treacherously to entrap Christ like the lawyer; not with a supernatural sincerity.

IV. Where was this young man's defect?

1. He asked like a Pharisee, in their sense. If the question had been by what means must I be saved, or what is the way to heaven, Christ would have answered him as St. Paul did the jailor: viz. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*: If the question had been asked in a broken-hearted manner, sensible of his misery and inability, Christ would have taught him. But first, he thought men might be saved by their own works, and secondly, that these works were in their own power, and thus be saved by the merit of them.

2. Again, he was both ignorant of the law, and ignorant of himself; therefore Christ's business was to bring him to brokenness of heart by the law.

3. His next fault was, *the love of riches*, which is a dangerous obstruction to salvation. Fair intentions, and good offers, profit not, when any thing is loved before God and heaven. If the flesh be not mortified, and the world not conquered, it avails but very little.

4. To prove this inquiring young man, Christ gives him a law to try him by, viz. *Sell what thou*

hast and give to the poor, and come take up thy cross and follow me: but he went away sorrowful. Who-soever believes in Christ, must determine for God to be his chief good; for Christ to be his way; for faith to be the means; and for the glory of the Lord to be the great end. There must be a broken heart, a renouncing of the world, and an entire dependance on Christ, to bring us to heaven, without which all our earnest inquiries will be altogether useless.

Use.

1. How few go so far as this young man.
2. Do not rest in a bare desire to go to heaven.
3. Get a broken heart, and entire resignation.
4. Resolve seriously, and perform faithfully.
5. Allow of no reigning sin in the heart.
6. Be sure you conquer the spirit of the world.
7. Take heed of your besetting sin.
8. Have no reserve in the heart; this ruined the young man, and will ruin any other.

SERMON XXIII.

THE DIFFICULTY OF RICH MEN'S CONVERSION.

MARK X. 24.

Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God.

THE disciples of Christ marvelled greatly that rich men should find it difficult to get to heaven; but Christ told them, it was not the having riches, but the trusting in them, that made it difficult.

I. The sin of trusting in riches. This is a very common sin, and Job disclaimed it by saying, chap. xxxi. 24. *If I have made gold my hope, or said to fine gold, thou art my confidence.* The rich often think,

their wealth will procure them all they want and deserve, as if by their riches they were out of all danger.

Why is this sin so *common*?

1. Because of men's degenerate and corrupt state. Men make not God their chief good and last end, and thereby become idolators.

2. Because it is so secret, that those who have it are least sensible of it. Men seldom think they make an idol of money, because they do not offer sacrifice to it; but this is not discovered so much by the rites of worship, as by the workings of the heart towards it. Even speaking bad words of riches doth not exempt men from trusting in them.

II. The evil of this, both as to its heinous nature and evil effects.

Its nature.

1. It is a turning from and a renouncing of God, and a setting up another in its stead. It takes away the honour of God; harlot like, we prefer the gift to the man himself. Riches divert the heart, and lead it from God. The same temple will not serve God and the Philistines.

2. Covetousness is called idolatry, Ephes. v. 5. Mammon is the idol, and the worldling the priest. Trust in God, is a firm confidence that no evil shall befall us, and nothing truly good be wanting. There is a prime affection which keeps up all commerce between us and God; our heart is never kept in a right form, but when we look for all from God. Let a man but think himself sufficient to his own happiness, and he will soon lay aside God.

The evil effects.

1. It makes us incapable of eternal life. God is discharged from being our paymaster, and giving us a reward, when we trust in money. God sent the Israelites to their idols to see if they could deliver them, Judges x. 14.

2. It gives us a carnal confidence in its effects; yea, it is the ground of all miscarriage in practice. When men think they cannot be happy without so much coming in yearly, then they soon come to this, to dis-

obey God rather than lose it. Unless men conquer their worldly appetites, they cannot keep God's commandments.

3. It hinders us from looking after heavenly things. No man will earnestly seek the things above while he trusts in the world, and promises himself a long and a happy life. The soul seeks no farther, when it hath something to rest on; while we rest here, all other happiness is neglected.

4 It is the ground of all disquietude and discontent. If a man would be happy, let him have a good object for his trust, then he shall be safe, Psalm cxii 7. A good man that hears bad news is not afraid, because his heart is fixed on God. When a man puts his joy under the creature's power, he is liable to be dejected and disquieted.

III. Marks to discover this evil of trusting in riches.

1. When men oppress, and do wrong, and think to bear it out with their *wealth, power, and greatness*, as if there were no God to call them to account; or as if there had not been, or could not be a turn in affairs, so as to bring their honour low enough, and the poor and afflicted be exalted. God will sooner hurl the world upside down, than misery shall not want a comfort, and prove a bridle. Sometimes he sets up one, and puts down another, that by these changes he may keep the world in order, especially those that think they may do any thing, because it is in the power of their hand, Micah ii. 1.

2. An inordinate care and solicitude to get wealth; this multiplying of worldly cares cometh of unbelief, and want of confidence in God, Prov. xxiii. 4. *Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom.* This toiling shews we esteem it beyond what it deserves. There is a careful labour for the necessities of life, and to do good withal; but when men make it their main care, they then place their happiness in it. To distinguish between honest labour and worldly care, consider the disproportion of your endeavours to earthly, and spiritual and heavenly things; for our Saviour, when he describes the carnal fool in the gospel,

tells us, *so is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.*

3. When men think themselves better provided for by a wealthy apostacy than by a close adhering to God's all-sufficiency. Sometimes the keeping of wealth and religion come in competition with religion, when there is a debate with conscience, as here is your duty, and there your loss ; but if the debate continues so that gain bears sway, it is a sign that we trust in wealth rather than in the promises of God.

4. When men slacken, or omit the duty of prayer, because they are at ease, and have worldly abundance, remember, that trust in God, and prayer, should always go together. *Trust in him at all times, and pour out your hearts before him.* When men are full, careless, and cold, and think they need nothing, it may be God will hear, but not regard them.

5. When men think wealth shall secure them against all changes, and that possessing this, they shall see nothing but happy days, Luke xlix. 19 *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* Sensuality, security, and pride, are the sure fruits of carnal confidence. *The rich man's wealth is his strong city.* Prov.

6. When men are loath to forego riches when God call them to it ; a man should be indifferent to worldly things, so as to get, to keep, to want, or to have them just as God pleases. Be not over-dejected with worldly losses. *Mourn as if you mourned not.* 1 Cor. vii. 31.

IV. Remedies against putting confidence in earthly things.

1. Consider the uncertainty of them, Tim. vi. 17. What is more uncertain than men's estates : Riches are like winged creatures which fly away ; how are they gone, who can tell ! There is the fire, the thief, fraudulent bargains, displeasure of the times—many are the wings that riches have ; why then should men trust in them ? This should be thought of in the greatest prosperity. Alas, how many laid out all their wit and labour, and even ventured conscience too, to

get an estate or a good bargain, and behold, all is gone in an instant.

None ever trusted to the world, but they had cause to repent of it in the end. Wealth cannot make us happy ; hence God will set himself to disappoint a carnal trust. *He that trusteth in riches shall fall.* Prov. xi. 28.

3. It is very frequently, that the more wealth the more danger ; as many times thieves and robbers cut off the finger for the ring's sake, when they cannot otherwise pluck it off ; so is a man destroyed and made a prey for his wealth's sake.

4. Consider again, the unprofitableness of wealth without God ; it cannot make you safe, contented, or comfortable. *Man lives not by bread alone*, Matt. iv. 4, but by the Providence of God. And Oh ! how much better would it be to call to mind the iniquity of the traffic, the luxury, and sowing to the flesh ; the cries of the oppressed widow, orphans, or neglected poor, or your pride in apparel, when God comes to take away the soul ? Riches profit not in death.

5. Remember, God is the author of wealth ; if it increase, see and acknowledge his hand, and be thankful. It is the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich, Prov. x. 22.

V. Cautions.

1. Pray to be kept from the sin of trusting in uncertain riches.

2. Watch all opportunities to distribute riches usefully.

3. Be sure to make God your trust and confidence.

4. Get grace with your estate, or else it will be a snare.

5. Esteem riches less than religion and a good conscience.

6. Think of changes in the midst of fulness.

SERMON XXIV.

THE DANGER OF DESIRING WORLDLY RICHES.

1 TIM. vi. 9.

They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

I. **W**HAT is it to have a will to be rich ?

1. It is to make the world our chief scope, and to be wholly intent on getting riches and wealth.

2. That is a man's god, which is the last end of his actions, and upon which his care and thoughts do continually run.

II. The great danger which attends this eager desire.

1. *They fall into temptation* : although men's intentions may be pure at first, yet, they lie open to temptation : If men mean not to be tempted, let them keep out of the way of temptation.

2. *Into a snare* : Satan observes which way the tree leans, and presseth it down. Whilst Satan tempts, he keeps it out of sight ; but when men are caught in the snare, then he shews himself.

3. *Into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.* Many lusts, Titus iii. 3. *Serving divers lusts.* He that serves his lusts, has many masters to please : Some think they are several devils. One lust giving way to another, just as weeds and vermin destroy one another. The worldly man's heart is like a rank soil, capable of any thing but what is good.

4. *Foolish lusts* : such men are fools in God's account, and also in their own cool reflections : man was once wise, but hearkening to the devil, he became a fool.

5. *Hurtful lusts* : they destroy men's peace of mind, and pierce them through with many sorrows.

Thus it is with men who love the world, they rack their brains, and vex their spirits, and even waste their bodies, yea, and also fret at their own disappointments, envy the advancement of others, and there is no end of all their labours.

6. The result of it is, *they drown men in destruction*. By destruction is meant, death temporal. By perdition, death eternal: *drown men*, as it were with a millstone about their neck.

Use.

1. Let not the body but the soul first be served.
2. Consider your lusts grow with your prosperity.
3. There is what is necessary enough, and to spare.
4. Let moderation suffice, else abundance will not.
5. If you possess plenty, be thankful, content, and charitable.
6. Charities will plead for us, at the great day of accounts.

SERMON XXV.

THE GREAT EVIL OF LOVING THE WORLD.

1 JOHN, ii. 15.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

I. **W**HAT is it to love the world?

1. To love the world, is to affect and seek some private inferior good for itself, as the chief good and last end.

2. To love the world, is to lust after the pleasures of the flesh, as your last end and chief good, so as to desire the gratifications thereof, above all other things.

3. To love the world, is to seek after, and pride ourselves, in any worldly grandeur, or finite excellence, as our last end and best good ; so much the pride of life denotes.

4. Love to the world, consists in an habitual weight, or violent bent of heart towards some inferior good for itself.

5. To love the world, is to have the heart bound up in, and made one with the world : all love tends to union.

6. To love the world, is to spend the best of our time, thoughts, studies, cares, and endeavours for the procuring and preserving of worldly goods.

7. To love the world, is to make the creature the object or matter, not only of our use, but also of our supreme petition, complacence, satisfaction, and delight.

8. To love the world, is to be troubled for the loss of any creature comfort, more than for the loss of God and heaven.

II. What is it to love God ?

1. It is to transfer the actions ; and passions of our love from the world to God, as our last end and chief good : it implies a superlative preference of God above all lower objects. Luke xiv. 29.

2. It is a divine weight or bent of the heart towards God, as the chief centre of all happiness. Deut. vi. 5. Its properties are, a vehement direct motion towards God, and a complacent petition in reposing ourselves in him, as our best beloved.

3. The nature and degrees of this love, are, sincere and cordial, judicious and rational, intimate and passionate, pure and virgin-like, regular and uniform, generous and noble, permanent and abiding, vigorous and active, divine and heavenly, yea infinite and boundless.

4. It works the heart to an adherence to, and an intimate union with God, and to a resignation of all concerns to God's will. It commands the soul into obedience, and is quiet submission to all God's providential dealings with us.

5. It is to be vigilant, cheerful, and diligent in God's service. It uses all things in subordination to God, and winds up the soul to a divine life: yea, it transforms the lover to the image, likeness, and imitation of the God he loves.

III. Wherein is the love of the world inconsistent with the love of God?

1. Predominant love to the world, is contrary to, and inconsistent with the love of God; as it robs God of that love and honour, which is due to him as our sovereign and chief good.

2. Love to the world, breeds confidence in the world, whereby the heart is turned off from its dependance on God, as its first cause.

3. Love to the world, is real flat idolatry, and herein also inconsistent with the love of God; yea, it is down-right spiritual adultery, and as such cannot consist with the pure love of God: the jealousy of God will not admit a rival.

4. Love to the world, is a deliberate contrived lust, and it is such an habitual enmity and rebellion against God, that the love of it, and that of God, never did, nor ever can dwell together in our heart.

5. Love to the world, forms our profession of, and our subserviency to this world's interest.

6. Love to the world, is the root of all sin, and therefore what more inconsistent with the love of God. To love God is to hate evil; therefore to love evil, either in the cause or effect, is to hate God.

7. Love to the world, blinds the understanding, stifles convictions, breaks all chains, and so opens a larger door for sin: it is the disease of the soul: it pollutes and defiles the whole man.

8. Love to the world, brings on apostacy: animal passions inordinately indulged, defile the soul: it puts the soul and the world into wars and fightings.

9. Love to the world, is the devil's throne, the helm of the ship where he sits, and as such steers the ship towards hell.

10. Love to the world, transforms a man into its

own likeness, which is quite inconsistent with the love of God. Love makes us like, and so one with what we love. Love aims at unity : he that loves the earth must be earthy, and thus his spirit becomes incarnate with the flesh.

Lastly, Love to the world transforms the man into a beast, and so makes him incapable of the love of God. It is better to be a beast than like a beast. The more the beast cleaves to the world, the less power it has to cleave to God.

SERMON XXVI.

THE DIFFICULTY OF GETTING TO HEAVEN.

LUKE xiii. 24.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

1. CHRIST having spoke this parable of the *mustard-seed*, and of the *leaven* hid in three measures of meal ; shewed also the efficacious power of the gospel on the minds of men, and its speedy propagation through the world.

2. In his journey to Jerusalem, a certain man proposed a question to him, concerning the number of those that should be saved. *Lord, are there few that be saved ?* The Jews thought their whole nation would be saved, because they were the seed of Abraham.

3. Christ turns himself to the people, rather than answer his vain curiosity, and said, instead of being inquisitive concerning the salvation of others, be solicitous about your own.

I. What is meant by the strait gate ? Metaphorical and figurative language is frequently used in

scripture, to illustrate spiritual subjects ; and to make them easy to be understood. Hence, when we speak of a *gate* or *door*, we mean a way of entrance into Christ's true church, as mentioned in John x. 7. It may also mean the gate of *regeneration*, or the *new birth*, through which all must pass to enjoy the kingdom of God.

1. To enter into Christ's church, we must enter by him as the door—*I am the door*, both for the pastor and the flock. It is by him alone, that they shall find an entrance into his everlasting kingdom. Prophets and apostles all declare, that *there is no salvation in any other name. His blood was shed for the remission of sins*, Luke xxiv. 26. *God hath set forth his Son, to be a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood.* In no other way can we obtain pardon and a title to heaven, than by entering in at this gate. This entering implies, living faith in his blood.

II. The gate of regeneration, seems also to be meant. This was necessary, both for Jews and Gentiles ; viz. both for wicked sinners and moral professors. A new nature given by the Spirit, is what is meant by being born again, without which none can be subjects of this kingdom, nor share in its glory hereafter. If we have not entered in at this gate, we are not in the *narrow way which leadeth unto life*, and consequently must be in the *broad way, which leadeth to destruction*.

8. This gate is represented as being strait, because of the difficulties that attend it ; and for the same reason, the way itself is described as being a *narrow way*. This will appear from the following considerations.

1. In this way, nothing is found that flatters the flesh, but a great many things to oppose it : all must be denied, forsook, and given up.

2. As to the gate, it receives none who are filled with pride, or that are distended with luxury : we must both deny ourselves, and take up our cross.

3. It does not admit persons laden with riches, or those who drag with them the implements of this vain world.

4. None can pass through this gate but naked men, who are stripped of all worldly lusts, and who,

having crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts, are, as it were, emaciated into spirits.—Erasmus.

4. We must part with all our sins; break off all connection with evil doers; have no fellowship with the works of darkness; utterly renounce our own righteousness; have a deep conviction of our own dangerous state; endure persecution, and oppose all that ever the devil may bring against us.

5. We must agonize in prayer, and exert all our powers of soul and body, give up all, and have no confidence in the flesh, with an entire dependance on Christ's *atonement* for salvation. These are all experimentally and practically implied in believing in Christ.

III. What by striving to enter in?

1. Having a power, using it, and agonizing in prayer till we overcome: it properly means to continue with ardent resolution, and intimating that the strait gate is beset with a number of enemies, through which we must force our way.

2. It also implies, at least, an abiding sense of the necessity of entering in at this gate, and of persevering in the ways of holiness to the last.

3. A diligent conscientious regard to all the ordinances of God, both public and private, such as public, social, family, and private prayer; reading and hearing the word, receiving the sacrament, and fasting or abstinence.

4. It implies, that we oppose all that opposes us in our way, and we must wage continual war with the world, flesh, and devil; and that we endure hardness as good soldiers to our lives end.

IV. Who shall seek to enter in, and not be able?

1. How many either do not seek and strive at all, or are seeking it by their own works, by which they cannot possibly find it.

2. Others may be clear in their views, but are cold in their affections; lukewarm, half-hearted, double-minded, and unstable as water, vainly striving to serve two masters—*God and mammon*.

3. How are some temporising, striving to unite what none ever yet could, an earthly and a heavenly mind.

Part of your time you give to your devotions, then you go and serve another master, relishing and complying with the manners of a sinful age.

4. You are not in earnest, *neither cold nor hot*, therefore offensive to God, viz. both dead and formal in prayer and other duties. Such are continually running into inconsistencies of conduct, and those transient impressions they feel, will rather serve to perplex and torment, than to guide and preserve.

5. But the last class are those, who will seek when it is too late. *When the Master is risen up, and hath shut too the door, &c.* This alludes to the customs used at their nuptial banquets among the Jews, when all the guests were come in, and before the feast began, the master rose up and shut too the door, after which no one could obtain admission.

6. To enhance their misery, they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves thrust out!

Use.

1. Examine this gate, and strive to enter in. How awful to be cold in religion.

2. Consider the consequences of being shut out—lost and undone.

3. Seek and strive with all diligence, work out your own salvation, and do his commandments, and you shall be blessed indeed, and have a right to enter through the gates into the city.

SERMON XXVII.

THE GREAT DANGER OF COVETOUSNESS.

LUKE xii. 15.

Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

- I. **W**HEREIN the nature of this vice consisteth.
1. Not in a provident care about lawful things.
 2. Not in a regular industry in obtaining them.
 3. Not in every degree of respect towards them.
1. Covetousness consists in an eager and insatiable desire after the things of this world. Persons sometimes use unjust ways to get it; such as fraud, deceit, violence, and oppression.
2. Covetousness consists in an anxious and tormenting fear and care about obtaining the things of this world.
3. Covetousness consists in seeking the things of this life with the neglect of other things infinitely better.
4. Covetousness is manifested by an unwillingness to spare any thing out of their abundance, for the relief of those who are in want.
5. Men are covetous, who place their trust and confidence in, and take their happiness from riches. Job xxxi. 24. *Who make gold their hope, and say to the fine gold, thou art my confidence.*
6. He is covetous, who places his chief felicity in a great fortune; who can quit religion and violate conscience, and run the hazard of his soul.
- II. The unreasonableness of covetousness.
1. It takes men off from religion, and the care of the soul. Inordinate desire after riches makes men neglect their duty. They employ all their time, care, and thoughts about temporal things; and their eager pursuit after these things steals away their hearts from

God, robs them of their time, and all opportunities for their souls.

2. Covetousness tempts men to do many things contrary to religion, and inconsistent with it. He that will engage deeply in the world, must use much more caution than most do, to do it without sin, both in getting, in keeping, and in spending it.

3. A covetous mind may propose, that when he is carried to such a pitch, that he will then sit down satisfied, and will seek no more. But he deceives himself; he will never be the nearer being satisfied, Eccles. v. 10. *He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver.* No degree of wealth can satisfy a covetous mind.

The best use of riches is in ways of charity; and the poor man's charity, though it cannot be of so great extent in the effects of it, yet in the degree of its virtue and rewardableness, it may be equal to it.

The two great designs of men in this world are, or should be, 1. To support life as long as they can. And, 2. To make their lives as happy as possible. Whatever is beyond a sufficient competency does not contribute to our support or comfort: the rest is all idea. Man's happiness consisteth not in his abundance; but in the enjoyment of good, and in a state of freedom from evil.

Real happiness depends upon a great many causes, among which, a competency of the things of this world is one.

1. Inward evils, such as disorderly passions, produce anxiety of mind, guilt of conscience, vicious inclinations, and irregular passions: these disturb a man's peace.

2. Outward evils, such as want, contempt, bodily pains and diseases, unhappiness in friends and relations. A poor man is satisfied when he obtains what he wants; but the covetous man wants that which even he hath, as well as that which he hath not.

SERMON XXVIII.

ON THANKSGIVING.

PSALM ciii. 1.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!*

I. **T**HANKSGIVING.

It is that part of divine worship, wherein we acknowledge benefits received, and implies, 1. A right apprehension of the benefits conferred. 2. A faithful retention of benefits in the memory, and frequent reflections upon them. 3. A due esteem and valuation of them. 4. A reception of those with a willing mind, and a vehement affection. 5. Due acknowledgment of our obligations. 6. Endeavours of real compensation, and a willingness to serve and exalt him; with esteem and veneration to our kind Benefactor.

II. Blessings for which we should be thankful.

1. Temporal blessings; such as health, food, raiment, and rest, with all our bodily and mental endowments.

2. Spiritual blessings; such as the Bible, ordinances, gospel, and its blessings; yea, for grace, adoption, pardon, justification and sanctification.

3. Eternal blessings; as, the enjoyment of God for ever: also, for all that is past, both what we now enjoy, and what is promised; for private and public, for ordinary and extraordinary blessings; for prosperity, and even for adversity, so far as is for our good.

III. The excellency of this duty of thankfulness.

1. From its antiquity: it existed in paradise before Adam fell, and therefore prior to the graces of repentance, faith, and love.

2. Its operation being far beyond many other graces, which are confined to time and place.

3. Its felicity: some duties are painful; as repent-

ance, conflicts with sin, &c. : but this is a source of sublime pleasure.

4. Its reasonableness and its perpetuity: it will be in exercise for ever.

IV. Obligations to this duty arise, 1. From the relations we stand in to God. 2. From the divine command itself. 3. The promises which God has made. 4. The examples of all good men. 5. Our unworthiness of the blessings we receive, and the prospect of eternal glory.

SERMON XXIX.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I COR. xi. 24.

Do this in remembrance of me.

I. **T**HE nature of the Lord's Supper.

1. It is a solemn institution of religion, and we are obliged to receive it frequently; we cannot neglect it without pouring great contempt upon our Saviour.

2. Christ appointed this supper, for a solemn remembrance of his great love to us, in laying down his very life for us.

3. The comfort of it is great, as it does not only represent his body broken, and his blood spilt for us, but likewise seals to us all those benefits procured by his passion. It confirms us in goodness, and also strengthens us in our obedience.

4. The best preparation for it is by sincere repentance for all our past sins and miscarriages, by daily prayer to God for his grace to enable us to keep his commandments, by being in charity with all men, but

especially with those who have injured us in word or deed.

II. The manner of doing it.

1. In so doing, we call to mind the greatest and best of friends, namely, Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

2. The bread being broken, represents the breakings, bruising, and woundings of Christ's soul and body.

3. The wine being drank, shews that man's life is not sustained by eating, except he drink also.

4. Why wine, and not water? As no liquor, like wine, doth cheer a sad drooping spirit, so nothing doth gladden and cheer the soul, like faith in a bleeding Saviour, and Christ's love in the heart as a fruit of it.

5. Christ appointed this supper for believers, for his own disciples; to enliven and quicken their remembrance of him till he comes again.

6. Those that can discern the Lord's body in this ordinance, and can receive it in faith, are blest indeed; the want of this is the reason of unworthy receiving. Therefore be sure to keep up a spiritual taste and relish for this most blessed ordinance of Christ.

III. The great ends of this duty.

1. To remember Christ in this supper, is a debt you owe to him, and must pay it.

2. To neglect this duty, is a sin against the command of the best of Princes.

3. Consider the relation you stand in to this Saviour, this Christ who left the command.

4. The command being easy, pleasant and honourable, must be greatly aggravated by being slighted. What is more pleasant than a feast?

5. Think of the contempt you throw on this ordinance, by treating it with neglect.

6. Think with what hypocrisy this neglect is accompanied; to endeavour to seem better than you are.

7. How unworthily you cast contempt upon the practice of Christ's church in all ages. What church for 1700 years but have made conscience of this duty.

8. Only think how unmerciful you are to your own souls, by denying them their proper and necessary food.

SERMON XXX.

THE POSSIBILITY OF RICH MEN'S CONVERSION.

MARK X. 25.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

1. **A**T first view, this text seems to cut up at one stroke, a rich man's hopes of getting to heaven at all.

2. Christ sufficiently knew both the worth and way of salvation, and likewise the state and danger that men's souls were in.

3. Here Christ shews the difficulty by a similitude, viz. as hard as for a thing of the greatest bulk to pass through the straightest place.

4. As a camel cannot pass through the eye of a needle without a miracle, no more can a rich man be converted, without the singular power and grace of Christ.

5. Some say the word signifies a cable, by which mariners fasten the anchor of the ship : but others think the beast is here intended, rather than the man.

6. It seems pretty evident that this proverbial speech is principally intended to signify the extraordinary great difficulty of rich men's conversion ; not to be surmounted but by the power of almighty grace. Jer. xiii. 23.

I. Shew, that the salvation of rich men is possible, though difficult.

There are general duties that both concern them and all other common christians.

There are also peculiar duties expected from the rich, which makes their entrance into heaven the more difficult. These are such, as, taking up the cross, Matt. xvi. 24. If any man, without exception, small or great, poor or rich, will be my disciple, they must all submit to these terms. They must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ.

1. We must deny our own wisdom, will, affections, and interests, and be altogether at the disposal of Christ, endeavouring to please him in all things; without which, nothing else will do: we must rather suffer the loss of all things, than hazard the favour of God.

2. We must *take up our cross*; viz. be willing to take affliction, either from the hands of God or man, for Christ's sake. Men may go to heaven without much suffering, but not without a heart that would suffer, if called to it. To be joyful in tribulation, is a mystery to the world. To be averse to suffer, is natural to man; but that carried to excess, argues a tenderness of the flesh, and that we consult our grand enemy Satan. The more men have to lose, the more tender they are of losing it: a little is soon quitted.

3. *Follow Christ*. Christ's doctrine is to draw us from the pleasures of the flesh to eternal life. This is instanced in two things.—1. In humility of heart, Matt. xi. 29. We should be of an humble, lowly spirit, Phil. ii. 3. Christ indeed was bright and glorious, and yet he set his disciples a pattern of humility. Christ made himself of no reputation, Phil. ii. 6, 7. Christ washed his disciples' feet, and shewed his humility by setting a little child among his disciples.—2. In purity and holiness, 1 John, ii. 6. *To walk as he walked*. 1 John, iv. 14. *As he is, so are we in this world*. Prosperity and holiness seldom go together: we oftener find affliction to forward holiness. When men wax full, they often kick and throw off all respect to God and holiness.

II. The peculiar obligations of the rich.

3. They have peculiar duties to attend to. Great

bounties call for great returns. Such must render to God according to what they have. 1 Chron. xxxii. 25. *Hezekiah rendered not according to what was done unto him.* He that tastes of plenty should distribute plentifully.

2. They have more opportunities of being free to good duties, as not being burdened with hard labour. Thus, they have more time for study and improvement. Having a better education, they have more advantages.

3. They can more readily relieve others, and thereby make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness: thus they may become rich in good works. Others that have hearts free to it, have not estates.

4. Much more is required of the rich, because of the influence of their example. The more any are lifted above others, the more conspicuous are their actions. But alas! who propagate sin more than the rich?

III. This difficulty ought much to be insisted upon.

1. Security and forgetfulness of God is the cause of all the mischiefs and miseries which the rich are liable to.

2. This should be much insisted upon to awaken suspicion, lest men's estates should be their ruin.

3. It should also be pressed, to stir all such to examination; as every one will find, that riches make the business of salvation more difficult.

Use.

1. Art thou rich? Remember thy standing is but slippery.

2. Be more inclined to do good, than to consume thy riches.

3. Consider, much is expected of those that receive much.

4. Be not ungrateful for thy mercies.

SERMON XXXI.

CHRIST'S ANGER AT THE PEOPLE'S HARDNESS.

MARK iii. 5.

And Jesus looked on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.

1. **I**N Christ there is more of compassion than passion.

2. Christ distinguished between the man and the sin.

3. The causes of which are mentioned in the text.

I. Describe this hardness of heart.

1. Sometimes it is described as alluding to the neck. Prov. xxix. 1. It is a metaphor taken from the refractory oxen, that will not endure the yoke.

2. Sometimes to the face, Jer. iii. 5, noting impudence, as it can no more blush than a rock or a stone.

3. Here it is ascribed to the heart, Ezek. iii. 7. Thus it noteth obstinacy. Thus a shameless face, a stiff neck, and a hard heart, all go together. Men are first disobedient, then obstinate, lastly impudent.

4. Blindness is incident to the understanding, sear- edness to the conscience, slipperiness to the memory, deadness to the affections, and stubbornness to the will, by which we chuse and refuse.

Its nature.

1. Such as is in the labourers hand, or in the traveller's heel; dry and callous: thus it will not readily yield to any impression.

2. Like adamant, diamond, or flint, or even the hardest rock.

Different kinds.

1. Natural hardness is a part of inbred corruption; corruption remaining till God takes it away. This aversion to God and goodness we brought with us into the world.

2. Voluntary and acquired. When men wilfully

neglect the counsel of God against themselves increaseth our hardness yet more and more.

3. Penal and judicial. Man is naturally hardened; he doth not turn to God, and as judicially he cannot God hardeneth as a just Judge, not by infusing evil, but by withdrawing good, viz. grace. God is said to harden two ways, viz. By leaving some men in their natural hardness: also, By giving up others to a reprobate sense: men harden themselves in sin, and God leaves them to it.

4. This hardness is either total or partial. It may be partial, as is too much the case with God's children. *He upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart*, Mark xvi. 14. In the one it is felt and bemoaned; but in the other it is not. In a partial hardness men grieve, and lament it; but in a total hardness, it is neither discovered nor mourned at.

5. This hardness is either felt or unfelt. Felt, as grief for hardness is a good sign of grace; as a judicial hardness is neither felt, feared, nor grieved about. Good people fear this hardness as the greatest evil, and complain of it as the greatest burden.

II. Causes of this hardness.

1. Ignorance: A blind mind and a hard heart always go together. John xii. 40. *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, &c.* Men are first unteachable, and then implacable. God's children seldom feel hard, but when divine light is obscured: light begets tenderness.

2. Unbelief: Faith makes all truths active and lively. We must not only believe things to come, but there must be an hearty consent to them, as if we saw them before our eyes. All disrespect of divine threatenings and promises cometh of unbelief: faith gives them weight and force.

3. Custom in sinning: As an highway is trodden hard by long travelling, so by sinning constantly, the heart grows daily harder and harder.

4. Hypocrisy: The art of deceiving others is called dissembling; but that of deceiving ourselves, is called formality. Hypocrisy is a constant lie, and every lie

is a sin against God. Conscience, like the stomach when it hath no solid food, draweth in wind.

5. Pride and stubbornness: Men scorn to be controulled. Pharaoh said, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?* Exod. v. 2. Men scorn to submit to ordinances, or to be checked by Christ's messengers: although indeed, the heart riseth against the authority of God himself.

6. The deceitfulness of sin is another cause of hardness of heart. Heb. iii. 15. *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts—Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

III. Why doth sin so deceive and harden us?

1. By general invectives we may complain of it; but at the same time we may regard it in our hearts. The devil cares not how much we speak against sin, if we will but still love and practise it.

2. By delaying repentance: *Go thy way for this time*, Acts xxiv. 25. Thy hardness, by delaying, increases every day; therefore take heed thy heart be not deceived and hardened thereby.

3. It comes wrapped up in carnal baits of profit and pleasure, to gratify our lusts and interests. It always pretends great advantages, but it deceives us.

4. It hath many colours: Many sins lie hid in secret, and unrepented of, and so the heart is still more hardened.

5. If not repented of, it will increase: It is of a bewitching nature, and steals into the heart insensibly. From thoughts it goes on to action, and then to custom.

First, men excuse sin, then justify it, and after that glory in it, and in time grow senseless and confirmed in bad habits.

6. A false idea of God's mercy, and from hence taking encouragement to sin.

Its heinous nature.

1. It is a contending with God: yea, this contention is between God and a sinner's hard heart.

2. It is in itself the sorest of all judgments: When all other means fail, God gives men up to a hard heart, and a reprobate mind.

3. It never goes alone, but brings other judgments along with it. Pharaoh had plagues upon plagues.

IV. The great evil of this malady.

1. Small sins will harden as well as great ones. A little leak undiscovered will sink the ship.

2. Sins of omission as well as commission, will harden. Yea, the neglect of good duties is a more general means of destruction than the commission of evil. Look well to small sins, and then so many mischiefs will not befall you.

3. None are more confident of the goodness of their hearts, than those who have hard hearts.

4. Hardness often creeps in, in the time of ease and prosperity.

5. This is a grievous sin, especially when most unseasonable, viz. in times of judgment, and the clear light of the gospel.

6. This hardness will increase: first grow careless, then disobedient.

7. Dilatory excuses are in general the last refuge.

SERMON XXXII.

THE DUTY OF MEDITATION.

GEN. xxiv. 63.

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at even-tide.

1. **T**HE context describes Rebecca's journey with Abraham's servant.

2. The first interview between Isaac and Rebecca, viz. when he went to meditate.

3. Isaac goes to meet with God, and he met with Rebecca also. Godliness is profitable for all things. The flesh says, all is lost that is spent with God.

4. It is good to obey all impulses of the Spirit, as

some persons by going aside to pray, have escaped such as lay in wait for them. Luther tells of a man who passed by a sermon, and was presently surprised by thieves. In these words are the following things.

I. The person : Isaac, Abraham's son.

God said of Abraham, *I know him, that he will command his children after him.* Gen. xviii. 19.

1. Good education leaves a savour upon the spirits, at least a reverence for the duties of religion; therefore no wonder Abraham's son went out to meditate in the field.

2. Some suppose Isaac, at that time, to be about thirty years of age. Too many young people think meditation a very dull thing, and fit only for the decay of old age. But the exercises of Isaac were pious, and worthy of his being Abraham's son.

II. His work : The margin reads it, he went out to pray.

1. Some say, to sing God's praises, and to exercise his private devotions. Properly speaking, he went out to meditate on good things, and to pray to his God.

2. To discourse with God and his own soul, and thus to converse with God privately and familiarly. Meditation is helpful in collecting our thoughts, and in drawing the mind from the world.

III. The place: The field.

1. Partly for privacy : Deep thoughts require stillness and retirement. It is said, that many of David's Psalms were composed in the wilderness. He that would have the company of God and his own thoughts, must retire, and go aside from company. Thus have many christians solaced themselves in God. The most familiar converse between God and the church is in private.

2. Retirement hath approbation from none but God and conscience : therefore in this duty there are no by-ends to serve. Here the eyes of men hath no influence upon us.

3. A field seems a help to meditation : fancy and invention being raised by the sweetness, variety, and pleasure of it. Some indeed may meditate better

when all the senses are locked up from all outward objects.

IV. The time: At even-tide.

1. All time is alike to God—the third, sixth, or ninth hour: only we should observe when our own spirits are most lively.

2. To some, the morning is fittest for thought, before the mind has received any representations from natural or carnal objects: by some called virgin thoughts, not prostituted to inferior, base objects.

3. Isaac made duty his refreshment, where he goes to recreate himself with God. How shameful, that his solace should be our burden. This time was not of necessity, but of choice. Many spend their strength in the world, and offer God only their drowsy services late at night, when their senses are nearly locked up.

I. What is meditation?

1. Occasional meditation, is when the soul spiritualizes every object, about which it is conversant. A pure heart seeth all things in God, and God in all things: yea, even a mustard seed may yield spiritual applications.

2. There is a set and solemn meditation. There is also a reflux meditation, viz. a solemn parly between man and his own heart. Ps. iv. 4. *Commune with your own hearts, and be still.* Here a man becomes his own accuser: this is necessary, though difficult work. There is also a meditation which is more direct, and may be called experimental and practical.

3. Meditation is a pure and rational converse with God; it is the flower and height of consecrated reason. It is likewise a moral duty, Josh. i. 8. *The law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.* It is therefore a necessary duty, and ought not to be omitted, without endangering the languishing of all graces.

Observe, To hear and not to meditate is unfruitful. To meditate and not to hear, endangers errors. To pray and not to meditate, is rashness.

II. The necessity and profit of meditation.

1. Knowledge without meditation is but hear-say, viz. to talk after one another like parrots.

2. That we may the better retain what we know : sermons meditated on are long remembered ; solemn and serious thoughts leave lasting impressions on the mind.

3. Meditation serves to keep our thoughts always present with us. This is the Spirit's office. John xiv. 26. *He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

4. Meditation is a great help to the work of grace in the heart ; it is like the bellows, to blow up, and inflame the affections.

5. Meditation maketh the life of grace more sweet, easy, prudent and lasting. Meditation secures the good we get.

III. Rules to guide us in this weighty business.

1. Whatever you meditate, should be drawn to application. Job v. 27. *Lo, this we have searched, so it is : hear it, and know thou it for thy good.* Do it by way of trial, charge, and command.

2. Pry not further than God has revealed ; let your thoughts be bounded by the word. When once men raise their thoughts, they are apt to soar too high.

3. When you meditate, do it with reverence and care ; as God's perfections are rather matters of admiration than inquiry.

4. In meditating on common things, keep in mind a spiritual purpose, and meditate most on those things you need. Seasonable thoughts will have the greatest influence, and be attended with the greatest benefit. Psalm lvi. 3. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in the Lord.*

5. Whatever you meditate upon, take heed of slightness : transient thoughts leave no impression behind them. Meditate but on one thing at once : a wandering, skipping meditation seldom profits much.

6. Leave not holy thoughts till you find some profit by them, viz. either tastes of love, or warm affections, begotten in yourselves. Be thankful when blessed in meditation, or you may perhaps find it difficult the next time.

7. Do not bridle up your thoughts too much : God calls for religion, no logic. Let your thoughts be more like as they came from a fountain, than a steel.

8. Your sincerity is the measure of your meditations ; covet the best gifts, but not inordinately : desire to be good, rather than to be esteemed great.

9. Begin and end all with prayer. In the beginning, pray for a blessing ; and in the end, commend your thoughts to God. Our motions are fleeting, and it is God alone that must preserve us in those resolutions of consecrating ourselves and all we have to him.

IV. Some hindrances to this duty.

1. One of these hindrances is spiritual sloth. Men are unwilling to apply themselves to what is painful and difficult. If grace would drop from the clouds, or if God would be content with a few lazy wishes, or yawning drowsy devotions, men would soon be religious.

2. Another hindrance is love of pleasure : we prefer the beast to the angel. The sweets of religious exercises are far better than carnal pleasures.

3. But the worst of all hindrances is a guilty conscience. Guilt loves not retired thoughts, lest the mind should fall on itself, which it must do in meditation.

4. Consider, a lazy spirit is altogether unfit for christianity : hence the whole christian life is carried on with labour and diligence. *The diligent hand maketh rich.*

5. It is better to take pains, than to suffer pains ; and to be bound with the cords of duty, than with the chains of eternal darkness in the bottomless pit.

6. Nothing is so hard in God's service, but there is love enough to sweeten and surmount it ; as, hard industry, with activity, joined with the love of God and prayer, will surmount impossibilities.

V. How must those hindrances be remedied?

1. Get your conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ ; without this, men are guilty, fearful, and without fortitude.

2. Use holy moderation and sobriety in your business and pleasures: order all your affairs with wisdom.

3. Keep the body in a fit frame for devotion, otherwise it will clog the mind: there is a sanctification of body as well as mind.

4. To prevent leanness of thoughts, get a good stock of sanctified knowledge. If you buy by the penny, you will get a stock in time, with unwearied diligence.

5. A loose spirit is apt to skip about from thought to thought, but becomes settled in nothing: but do not give way to it; use constant exercise. Voluntary neglects are punished with penal hardness.

Special helps.

1. Use constant, sober restraints.
2. Gird up your loins
3. Call in the Spirit's aid.
4. Dry up fancy with heavenly flame.
5. Be grave, serious, resolute, and diligent.
6. Watch against all improper recreations.
7. Avoid sinful diversion, how plausible soever it may be.



SERMON XXXIII.

THE DESIRE AND DELIGHT OF ANGELS.

1 PET. i. 12.

Which things the angels desired to look into.

TWO principal things there are in the gospel, that greatly recommend it, viz. its truth and its worth. 1 Tim. i. 15.

2. In Paradise, this was represented by the *tree of life*, and the *tree of knowledge*.

3. Under the law, by the candlestick and the shew-bread.

4. The scope of this context is to shew the worth of that salvation which is the end of the christian faith.

5. To command and enhance its value, the apostle produceth the instance of the prophets and of the angels.

1. The prophets foretold it, viewed and reviewed their own prophecies, both to be acquainted with the thing itself, and also of the time of its accomplishment.

2. The angels looked into the excellency of this grace offered in Christ; they never could enough *wonder* and *rejoice* at it! They look into, viz. bow the head and stoop, to take a more narrow view of the thing which they saw. Luke xxiv. 12. The cherubims look on each other, and both on the mercy-seat. Exod. xxv. 20.

I. Who was it that desired this look?

1. The angels. There are both good and bad angels: but since the fall, bad angels are called devils. These good angels have an holy desire after an holy object: they behold his face, and minister in his presence: they behold, admire, and rejoice at the mystery of the gospel.

2. These creatures, made after the similitude of God, angels, and men, are seated in the two extremities of the world; the one in heaven, the other on the earth; that at both ends of the creation, there might be some to acknowledge his excellencies. In the upper world, these things are more regarded, and better studied: angels are both more excellent and numerous than men.

II. What things do they desire to look into?

1. The person of the Redeemer, the most glorious object that can be looked upon. A view of this will be our happiness for ever. John xvii. 24. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.* Yea, God himself is delighted with looking on Christ. Matt. iii. 17. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

2. The way of redemption. Ver. 11. *Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* Here infinite justice and mercy fully harmonize, and here both have full satisfaction.

3. The grace that comes to us through the Redeemer; grace to enlighten, to comfort, and fully to save us. Hereby we obtain *fellowship with the Father, with the Son, and with the Holy Ghost: and with the saints also.*

4. The mission of the Spirit, viz. the copious effusion of gospel-grace. Before the price was paid, God gave his grace more sparingly; now, *he pours floods upon the dry grounds.*

5. The providence of God, in leading his church, through all their various trials of every sort. In heaven, we shall see how God confounded the wisdom of men and devils.

6. The final and glorious state of the church. For poor dust to shine as stars, and be admitted with Christ to judge angels and men—this will be a glorious state indeed. Well may angels admire at these things. 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

III. The manner of their looking.

1. It noteth accurate inspection: to look towards and look through. The angels having veil of flesh to look through, understand more of these mysteries than we do. They have nothing to divert them. Their look is earnest and affectionate.

2. They desire what they are satisfied with, and are satisfied with what they desire. Desire is an act of love; the object of it is dear and esteemed: so the angels are deserving and enjoying.

3. They look upon it, so as to be ready to discharge their ministry about it. They are ready to be employed in God's business. They ministered to Christ in his temptation, agonies, grave, and at his ascension. And thus do they minister to the saints, whom these things concern. Heb. i. 14. The angels do so look into these things purchased by Christ, that

they help us to obtain them according to the will of God.

IV. Reasons for this looking.

1. Not total ignorance of the mystery, nor curiosity; but they see the worth of these things, so as to desire more of them. Ephes. iii. 10. *The manifold wisdom of God.*

2. They desire to look into these things, out of the delight which they take in them. And why is their delight so great in these things? 1. Because of the glory of God discovered: and 2. The good of man procured thereby: both being laid down in the angel's song, Luke ii. 14, *Glory to God, &c.*

Use.

1. The sublimity of these mysteries are fit objects for the angels of God to pry into.

2. The great good which is in these things, the angels are delighted with studying.

3. This shews the harmony between the Old and New Testament. *Abraham rejoiced to see my day.* John viii. 56. Many prophets and kings desired it.

Reproof.

1. That we look so little after such excellent things.

2. Why should we be weary in searching out these grand mysteries.

3. Let us both make accurate inspection, and get an interest by experience.

SERMON XXXIV.

ON CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

PSALM CXV. 15, 16.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous : the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly, and is exalted.

THE truth of this event—the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.

1. In proof of Christ's resurrection we have presumption, demonstrations, the circumstances of his burial, the testimony of his apostles, and the descent of the Holy Ghost—Jesus Christ died, and his tomb was found empty.

2. The apostles testimony afford eight considerations :

1. The nature of the witnesses. Had they been men of credit, opulence, learning, or eloquence, then their stile might have soothed the people into a belief of it : but they were the lowest of the people, without reputation, authority, or riches.

2. The number of their witnesses. Seen of Cephas, 1 Cor. xv. 5. Also of Simon, Luke xxiv. 34. Of the twelve, Mark xvi. 14. Of above 500 brethren at once. To the women, Matt. xxviii. 11. After that to James. Last of all, to St. Paul.

3. The facts which they avow. They had seen him with their eyes—they had touched him—they had eaten with him—they had conversed with him, and been commissioned by him.

4. The agreement of their evidence. People of all sorts of capacities and tempers—the witty, the dull, the timid, and the bold. How strange that such a body of evidence should be thus united ; this is the case with our witnesses.

5. The tribunals before which they give evidence.

Their testimony was examined by Jews, Heathens, Philosophers, and Rabbies. Providence continued Jerusalem forty years after the resurrection of our Lord, that all the Jews in the world might examine their evidence concerning it, and obtain authentic proof of the truth of christianity.

6. The place in which the apostles bore their testimony. They preached in Jerusalem, in the synagogues, on the very spot on which the infamous instrument of his sufferings had been set up.

7. The time of this testimony. Only three days after the death of Christ, when Jerusalem expected the spread of the report—while their enemies were mad, and Calvary was yet dyed with the blood they had spilt there.

8. The motives which induced them to publish the resurrection of Christ. Men usually deceive for their own interest; the apostles sacrificed their own interest without any inducement, even from salvation itself. They persist in their testimony until death, and sign the truths they have published with the last drop of their blood.

II. The demonstrations or miracles with which the apostles sealed the truth of their testimony.

1. Bring out your sick, demoniacs, or dead; confront us with Medes, Parthians, and Elamites; let Capadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia come forth.

2. Let all nations send us some of their inhabitants, we would restore hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, make the lame walk, cast out devils, and raise the dead. We illiterate publicans, trunk-makers, and fishermen, we will discourse with all people of the world in their own languages. All these proofs they gave of Christ's resurrection.

3. We will explain prophecies, elucidate the most obscure predictions, develope the most sublime mysteries, teach you notions of God, and precepts for the ordering your conduct, more extensive, sublime, and advantageous than any of your priests and philosophers. We will do more, viz, communicate those gifts to

others, of wisdom, knowledge, faith, prophecy, discerning of spirits, with divers kinds of tongues.

III. The acclamations which it produced.

The three days that passed between the death of Christ and his resurrection, were days of triumph for the enemies of the church ; but Christ riseth again on the third day. In these days, heresy triumphed over faith, tyranny over the perseverance of masters, and death over human hopes of immortal glory.

IV. Use.

1. We may say, if Christ be dead, we are dead also, and how can we live, if he, who is our life, had not forced himself from the state of the dead ?

2. Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life, John xi. 2.—xl. 20. Was ever joy more rational ; yea, was ever triumph more glorious ?

3. This is a stream flowing from motives to holiness. The Father accepted the ransom—the Son hath paid it—the Spirit published it—and the apostles confirmed it.



SERMON. XXXV.

ENCOURAGEMENT IN DOING GOOD.

GAL. vi. 10.

As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

I. **T**HE nature of this duty, called *doing good*.

1. It aludes to the good work of regeneration in our hearts, and of reformation in our lives, whereby we become acceptable to God, and profitable to man.

2. It comprehends all those ways wherein we may be beneficial to one another ; it reaches not only to

the body, but also to the souls of men : it is conversant in all those ways whereby we may serve the temporal, and spiritual good of our neighbour.

3. This may be effectually done, by instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the vicious, resolving and satisfying the doubtful ; also to confirm the weak, to heal the broken-hearted, and to confirm the melancholy troubled spirits.

4. It also includes feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and releasing prisoners, to redeem captives, to vindicate the injured in person, estate, or reputation ; to repair such as are ruined in their fortunes, and to relieve those who are in any kind of distress

II. The great excellency of this duty.

1. It is an imitation of the highest excellency and perfection. To do good is to be like God, who is good, and does good to all.

2. It is to be like the Son of God, who went about doing good, he said, *it was his meat and drink, to do the will of his Father.*

3. It is to be like the blessed angels, whose great employment is, to be ministering spirits for the good of men. So that to do good, is to be a sort of angel, a saviour, and a kind of god too in the world.

Motives to urge us to this work of doing good.

1. It is an argument of a noble generous mind ; whereas a low, mean, narrow, and contracted spirit cares only for its own things, and not for others.

2. It is the most noble work in the world ; because that inclination which prompts us to do good, is the very temper of happiness.

3. It is one of the greatest and most substantial parts of religion, and next to the love and honour which we pay to Almighty God, the most acceptable service that we can do to him ; it is one table of the law, and next to the first and great commandment, John iii. 17—iv, 20.

IV. The extent of the duty.

1. All mankind, but especially to christians ; those that are of the same faith, and the same religion. The Jews confined their kindness to their own nation, be-

cause they were forbid familiarity with idolatrous nations; yet their law exhorted them to be kind to strangers. *Negatively*, that we should not hate, nor bear any ill-will to any man, nor do him the least harm or mischief. Rom. xiii. 10, *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour*. *Positively*, the law of charity requires, that we should have an universal goodwill to all men, and wish every man's happiness, and pray for it as sincerely as we wish and pray for our own; but it is the expressions, effects, and exercise of this charity, in doing good to others, which is the duty here meant.

2. Our necessitous relations, who are of our blood and kindred, and members of our family, who challenge our preference before strangers. In this case, not only christianity, but nature ties this duty upon us, 1 Tim v. 8, *If any man provide not for his own, he is worse than an infidel*.

3. Our friends who have been kind, and have obliged us, if they fall into want, both justice and charity claims a particular consideration of their case.

4. Those who are of the household of faith, and of the same religion, members of the same body—these fall under a particular consideration in the exercise of our charities.

5. We must proportion our charities according to the merit and circumstances of the persons upon whom we bestow it. Those who labour hard, but are oppressed, or disabled by sickness—these need as much, and certainly deserve it much better than common beggars.

6. Those who have been liberal when they were in a condition to do it, or the children and near relations of those who were eminently charitable.

7. Those whose visible wants and great age and infirmities plead more than ordinary pity; and do at first sight conceive every one that sees them, that they do not beg out of laziness but necessity, and because they cannot work.

8. Those who suffer for the cause of religion, and are stripped of all for the sake of it—these ought to have a great preference in our charity to most other cases.

V. The measure of it.

1. As we meet with occasions, viz. as we have opportunity ; yea, and as often as opportunities offer, to be glad when occasions present themselves to do good.

2. It may refer to the season—whilst we have time we should remember, we can only do good in this world, in the next world we shall have nothing to do but to reap our reward.

3. It may refer to the degree, in proportion to our ability and estate, it is but in trust for certain uses, among which charity and alms is the chief.

4. It would be an easy thing with God to level men's estates, and to give every man a competency ; but he does on purpose suffer things to be distributed so unequally, to try and exercise the virtues of men in several ways. The faith and patience of the poor, the contentedness of those in a middle rank, and the charity and bounty of the rich.

VI. Encouragement to the duty—*You shall reap if you faint not.*

1. Sooner or later, in this world or the next, we shall receive the full reward of our well-doing, viz. we shall reap the pleasure and satisfaction of it in our own minds ; and be assured, there is no sensual pleasure that is comparable to the delight of doing good.

2. Another great advantage is, it is the sure way to derive a lasting blessing upon our estates, as what we give in charity is consecrated to God, and is one of the most acceptable sacrifices to God ; and it preserves the blessings and prayers of those upon whom we bestow our charities.

3. The blessing of God descends upon the posterity of those who are eminently charitable, and great benefactors to mankind.

4. The practice of this virtue will be one of the best comforts at the hour of death, and we shall then look back on what we have done with great contentment and joy.

5. The vast and unspeakable reward which this virtue of charity will meet with in the other world ; it will plead for us at the day of judgment, and preserve us a glorious recompence.

Use.

If doing good be the best work, let us set about it without delay.

SERMON XXXVI.

THE NORTH AND SOUTH WIND.

CANT. iv. 16.

Awake, O North wind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits.

1. **T**HESE appear to be Christ's words to his church, and the church afterwards invites him to eat his pleasant fruits.

2. The church feeling some deadness, desires some farther quickening; Christ then answers these desires, by commanding the winds to blow upon her.

3. Let us remember, it is Christ alone that can say to the clouds, drop not, and to the winds, blow not; therefore acknowledge Christ, both in want and in plenty.

I. Why is the Spirit of God compared to wind?

1. As the wind bloweth when and where it listeth, so it is with the Spirit of God—it blows universally and freely.

2. As the north wind has a piercing, cleansing force, so the Spirit searcheth and purgeth our hearts from dead works to serve the living God.

5. As the wind disperseth and scattereth clouds, making the air serene, so the Spirit disperseth the clouds of guilt and temptation, so that we can clearly see the face of God in Christ.

4. As the wind has a cooling, temperating quality,

for which reason there are in some countries yearly winds—so the Spirit of God allays the fiery heats of temptation, and brings the soul into a good temper.

5. Whereas the subtleness of the wind searcheth into every corner, so the Spirit searcheth the deep things of God, and also those hidden corruptions which nature could never have found out.

6. Again, the wind bears down all before it, beating down houses, and even tall cedars; so likewise, the Spirit is mighty in its operations; it brings down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. Observe, not only soil, air, and water, are necessary, but also the influences of heaven. Thus prayer comes from faith, faith from hearing, and hearing from the preacher, by whom God blows upon the heart.

Why do we need so much blowing upon?

Because of our natural inability, our dulness and heaviness, of contrary winds from without, all growth is from grace, and old grace without a fresh supply will not do against new crosses and temptations. When Christ draws let us run; when he blows, let us open to him.

II. Why is the church compared to a garden?

1. Because gardens are often taken from the common waste ground, to be appropriated to a better use. Thus has Christ taken it, dressed it, and fitted it to bear spices and herbs.

2. Because, in gardens, nothing comes naturally but weeds, except what is planted. The earth is a mother to weeds, but a step-mother only to herbs!

3. In a garden there is a variety of flowers and spices, as some cannot hear of a curious flower but they must get it; so a Christian cannot hear of any grace, but he labours to obtain it.

4. Of all places we most delight in our gardens, and take care of fencing, weeding, watering, and planting. Thus Christ walks in the midst of his seven golden candlesticks, and if he protects states, it is, that they may be a harbour to his church.

5. A garden always stands in need of weeding and watering; continual labour must be bestowed upon it.

Christ has always something to do with our hearts, and with his church, therefore he calleth upon the winds to blow upon this garden. Christ can soon make the desert an Eden. Let us bless God that we are planted in the church.

III. The end of this blowing—*that the spices may blow out.*

1. We need grace, not only to give us the principle of life, but likewise to draw forth that life which we enjoy.

2. It is not enough to be good ourselves, but we must let our goodness flow out, viz. Stream out for the good of others; we should labour to be burning and shining christians—full of light, life, and power.

3. Every creature should answer some good end, much more so every christian; we either are, or should be, like lights in the world—like a city on a hill, like candles on a candlestick; yea, the very salt of the earth.

IV. Christ's invitation—*Come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.*

1. Christ delights in the graces of his blessed and Holy Spirit—the scent thereof is very fragrant and grateful to him.

2. When grace reigns, the soul desires further acquaintance with Christ; approaching nearer and nearer to Christ, the spouse—the real spouse of his church.

Why is the church so earnest?

1. Because grace both shews the need, and helps us to prize Christ, which always breeds further likeness to him. It is from the Spirit we desire more of it; hence, those that love not the means have not this mind.

Why is Christ thus descried?

1. Christ delights in his garden; he makes it fruitful, and these fruits grow from plants of his own right-hand planting. They relish of his Spirit, and so fit for his taste.

2. A gracious heart is privy to its own grace and security, and so far is bold with Christ in a sweet and reverent manner—so much fellowship, so much confidence.

3. Christ blows, then the church says, come ! Christ begins in love, then love draws love. The fire of love melts more than the fire of affliction.

V. Christ's answer.

1. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse.
2. I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.
3. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey.
4. I have drank my wine with my milk.
5. Eat, O friends, drink abundantly O beloved.



SERMON XXXVII.

THE GARDEN AND THE SPOUSE.

CANT. V. 1.

I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse : I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey : I have drank my wine with my milk : Eat, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.

I. **A** Description of Christ's church—*My sister, my spouse.*

1. His sister by blood. 2. His spouse by marriage ; very proper bonds to tie us to Christ, and Christ to us.

2. Christ is our brother, and every member of the church his sister. The church is the daughter of a King, begotten of God ; the sister and spouse of a King, every way royal.

3. The church is the spouse of Christ ; the relationship springs out of him, as Eve out of Adam—out of his side when he was pierced—it rose out of his blood and death. You may justly say to Satan, if you have any thing to say, speak it to Christ, and not to poor weak men !

4. If Christ be so near us, let us labour for warm and chaste affections, wholly set upon Christ. Let us

keep up communion with Christ, and esteem nothing more than Christ's love, because he esteems nothing more than ours.

II. Christ's invitation to his church—*Eat, O friends.*

1. Friendship is the sweetness, nearness, and strength of love : in our friends our love rests itself ; conjugal friendship is the sweetest—all kinds meet in Christ. That of a husband, brother, sister, or any other relation, wherein friendship consists—all is too little to express the love of Christ.

2. In friendship there is mutual consent, union of judgment and affection : Here there is mutual sympathy, as if there were but one soul in two bodies.

3. Here there is likeness and liberty. Here is free intercourse between friends, a free opening of secrets—so Christ opens his secrets to us and we to him.

4. In friendship also there is comfort in one another ; Christ's delight is to be with us, and our's is to be with him.

5. In friendship there is mutual delight, honour, and respect for one another. Christ puts honour upon us, and we upon him ; friendship is maintained by due respect, and that only.

6. As Christ's friendship is sweet, so it is constant and lasting in all conditions ; if we are not ashamed of him he will not be ashamed of us.

7. Christ draws this friendship—*Eat, O friends.* There is no danger of taking too much ; when the spring is infinite we can never draw the wells dry ; the more strong the more acceptable and useful.

III. Christ's answer to the church.

1. God stirs up good desires, and then he answers them. It is well for us when we know what to pray for.

2. Let us stir up our hearts to make use of our privileges. What a favour to have the ear of our Prince, and what a loss when we dare not go to God with boldness.

3. In some states of mind we are but ill prepared for prayer ; as, if we regard iniquity in our hearts, or if we will not forgive others.

4. When does God regard prayer ? When he either

grants the thing prayed for, enlargeth our hearts still to pray on, or when he answers us in a higher mind, as St. Paul, when he gives us inward peace.

5. How shall we know that Christ is present with us? By light, heat, and fruitfulness; when we have warmth and vigour in our duties—when we desire to be made still better and better; and by the sweet communion of saints. Yea, especially when the word and sacraments are good and profitable to us.

IV, What did Christ delight in, and invite others to partake? Myrrh, spice, honey, and the honeycomb; yea, wine and milk—all which shew the sweetness, the variety, and the use of grace and spiritual comforts.

1. Myrrh and spices, to refresh the spirits, and to preserve from putrefaction, which things are used in embalming. The soul must be refreshed and embalmed with grace, or it will be noisome.

2. Milk and honey nourish and strengthen, and wine increaseth spirits, and allayeth sorrow and cares. The love of Christ is sweeter than honey or wine, and banishes all anxiety.

3. From this mutual delight, there is mutual feasting between Christ and his church; the church bringing what she has of his Spirit, and Christ comes with more of his bounty!

4. The Christian seeks out the evil that is in him to humble him, and the good that is in him to make him thankful. We should know our own graces.

SERMON XXXVIII.

*WARNINGS SERIOUSLY GIVEN, BUT SLIGHTINGLY
TAKEN.*

PROV. V. 12, 13.

How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me.

THE great advantages of laws, divine and human.
1. Human laws are the life and support of society, without them all would be disorder, rapine, distress—in them the magistrate draws the line of defence around both our persons and our property. In this light they are like pales fixed upon the precipice of destruction, to guard the thoughtless and rash from falling.

2. But laws, however pure in their principles, reasonable in their requirements, just in their prohibitions, kind and salutary in their tendency, or good in their end, unless punishments be annexed, they are but as a phantom to the rapacious. These punishments are not only for the satisfaction of justice, and the reformation of transgressors, but also for a warning to others against similar crimes.

3. To enjoy unmolested our lives and properties, is the foundation upon which the laws are founded; and he who would despise or infringe upon another's right, in either case, deserves to be deprived of his right, or excluded society.

4. How many, tempted by what others possess, leap over this enclosure, hoping to bear it away with secrecy, and enjoy it unmolested. Under this delusion many have ventured upon sin, and perhaps, when too late, have bewailed their folly and their crimes—locked up in a prison, galled with fetters, and pierced

to the soul by remorse, with the sentence of death, and the approach of a public execution!

5. Human laws, however useful, can only take cognizance of the outward action; but God's laws reach the very principal of the action, and extend their authority to our very thoughts. A perfect copy of this sacred code is only to be found in the volume of divine revelation.

6. Ministers, like magistrates, are to publish these laws, with vigilance, and exert their abilities in enforcing and carrying them into execution.

7. Their duty is, to warn the unruly, to invite the inattentive, and steadily to persevere in commending the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God; assuring every man, there is a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ.

8. Their office is, to shew the reasonableness of the divine command, the advantages of obedience, and the promise of divine aid in the way of duty. Thus sinners are invited and warned; but yet how many trifle away the day of grace, and defy the judgments of Omniscience, and finally make room for painful and hopeless reflections, crying out through eternity, *How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me.*

II. A view of a minister, or a parent's duty, respecting sinners in general, or young people in particular.

1. It is the minister's duty and province to instruct men in the way to holiness and happiness, how they may serve God on earth, and honour him in heaven.

2. Parents furnish you with God's word, caution you against youthful lusts, and inform you that God loves them who love him. They guard against temptations, and assure you that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness; that early piety ensures a cup of real pleasure, and communion with God is both attainable and delightful.

3. Reproof, as well as instruction, is a necessary branch of a minister's and parent's duty: They must warn and reprove every man. Parents must shew their displeasure against lying, profaneness, pilfering, even

in little things, and every advance towards indelicacy, or immorality of any kind.

4. Parents should walk within their own house in uprightness, and let their conduct be an example of what they recommend. Had the first approaches of sin been noticed, and pointed out, how much sin might have been prevented. But these tares which were sown, sprung up, acquired strength, and spread before they were noticed; or, the reproof came when the authority of the parent was gone. Parents cannot change their children, but the beginning of sin is like the letting out of water; Eli's false tenderness was the ruin of his sons.

III. The duty required of those possessed of these advantages.

1. These things require attention; they relate to the soul and to eternity! Shall God speak from heaven, shall his Son descend to our world, shall ministers plead and invite sinners to be reconciled, and all this be vain? Shall the joys of heaven, the torments of hell, and the prospects of eternity be exhibited to no purpose? Shall God's commands, invitations, promises, cautions, threatenings, and the trumpet of the gospel be blown, and will men still stop their ears? We entreat you to attend to the things that make for your peace. If possible avoid this stinging reflection, *I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, &c.*

My young friends, listen to your parents; they love you, and are interested in your present safety and future felicity; long experience has made them wiser than you. Their instructions proceed from a sincere sense of duty, both to God and you; incline then your ears to them that would instruct you.

2. These things require obedience—the obedience of faith to doctrines delivered to you. *Children obey your parents in the Lord.* View them as your guardians—honour them as your guides—receive the laws from their mouth—subject yourselves to their authority, and believe their restraints are for your good. Studiously guard against the intrusion of this painful reflection, *I obeyed not the voice of my teachers.*

III. The slight manner with which many treat these things.

1. Some pay little or no attention, either to the instructions, or the reproofs of ministers; they seldom come under the sound of their voice.

2. Others enter into the important truths delivered, but ward off the arrows of conviction.

3. Many are so far from inclining their ears to it, that they really despise it. In their heart they have an opposition, and distaste to the gospel.

4. Others, necessitated to attend by the authority of their parents or superiors, even hate the gospel. They say, *When will the sabbath be over?*

5. Others act a contrary part; they are proud, passionate, earthly-minded, intemperate. In words they own God, but in works they deny him. Therefore, either adorn the gospel, or do not disgrace it.

V. The awful effects of such a conduct.

1. O painful review! privileges slighted—warnings disregarded—a soul neglected—a Saviour crucified afresh—heaven contemned.

2. Bitter remorse! In that hour sinners will both see and condemn their folly.

3. They will then find they have made an irreparable mistake; they have lost their soul—all is ruined forever.

Use.

1. Parents, be diligent and faithful towards your children.

2. If the gospel be for your reproof, earnestly and diligently attend it.

3. Faith is not only attended with peace in life, but support in death.

SERMON XL.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

1 JOHN, iv. 8.

God is Love.

1. **LOVE** is a gentle, pleasing theme, the noblest passion of the human breast, and the fairest ornament of the rational nature.

2. Love is the cement of society, and the source of social happiness ; without it the universe would dissolve, and men and angels would turn savages, roaming about in barbarous solitude.

3. Love is the spring of every pleasure, for who could take pleasure in what he does not love !

4. Love is the foundation of religion and morality, for what is more monstrous than religion without love to God, who is the object of it ; or who can perform social duties, the endearments of those relations to which they belong.

5. Love is the softener and polisher of the human mind, and transforms barbarians into men ; its pleasures are refined and delicate, and even its pains and anxieties have something soothing and pleasing in them.

6. In a word, love is the brightest beam of Divinity that has ever irradiated the creation—the nearest resemblance to the ever blessed God.

I. The truth of this expression, *God is love.*

1. This is a deep, concise, laconic sentence, which even angel minds cannot fathom ; ineffable excellence, which even celestial eloquence cannot fully represent.

2. *God is love* ; not only lovely and loving, but even love itself ; pure, unmixed love, nothing but love ; love in his nature and in his operations—the object, source, and quintessence of all love.

3. Love comprehends the various forms of divine

beneficence, goodness that extends its bounties to all ranks of creatures, and diffuses happiness through the whole universe.

4. What is divine wisdom, but a modification of divine love, planning the best adapted schemes for communicating itself in the most advantageous, beneficent, and honourable manner, so as to promote the good of all his creatures.

5. What is divine power, but the omnipotence of love, which excited itself in the amazing production of this vast world out of nothing.

6. What is the holiness of God but love? Pure, refined, and honourable love. What is it but the love of excellence, rectitude, and moral goodness? Holiness promotes happiness. It is because he loves his creatures so much, that he requires them to be so holy; and that very thing, against which so many cavils and objections are raised, as too severe and oppressive, is the highest instance of the love of God to them, and his regard for their happiness.

7. What is the justice of God, but a modification of love and goodness—I mean that perfection of his nature which executes the semblance of his law upon offenders, inflicting upon them that punishment he had threatened to disobedience, exactly according to his own denunciations.

8. The penal sanctions of the divine law are but friendly warnings against danger and misery, and even admonitions discover no malignity against sinners, but the infinite benevolence of the heart of God, intended as preventives.

9. It is because he loves his creatures so much, that he requires them to be so happy—and that very thing is the highest instance of the love of God for them, and his regard for their happiness.

II. Some proofs of God's love.

1. Ye children of the most gracious Sovereign, why do ye harbour hard thoughts of him? Is it because his laws are so strict, and tolerate you in no guilty pleasure? The appointment is the kind restraint of love—not willing that you should indulge any thing that is deadly.

2. It may be said, why has God formed such a heaven as cannot be enjoyed universally? A happiness for every taste? It might as well be asked, why he has not created a light that would be equally agreeable to every eye—to the mole and to the owl, as well as to man and the eagle? God has prepared the only kind that is in his own nature possible, the only kind of heaven that affords real and extensive happiness to such of his creatures as are capable of it. Therefore acknowledge, admire, and love the beauty of the Lord and his holiness, Psalm xcvi. 12.

3. Consider, whatever tends to prevent sin, tends to prevent misery also—hence good laws are necessary for the prevention of sin, yea, the execution of penal sanctions upon offenders is both necessary and has a good tendency, and therefore is a display of divine love.

4. Are not many excited to seek salvation by means of the threatenings of the divine law; and is it not done by defeating their influence and tendency by their own wilful obstinacy? And are not these threatenings intended to promote the common good of the whole?

5. Consider farther, that criminals are incompetent judges of vindictive justice, because they are parties; and therefore we should form an estimate of it by their prejudices, but from the judgment of the disinterested and impartial.

SERMON XLI.

THE MISSIONARY ADDRESS.

1 COR. XV. 58.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

I. THE nature of this work.

1. You are sent to civilize the heathen, to humanize the savage, and to destroy the delusions of superstition and idolatry : all other pursuits and occupations are despicable compared to yours.

2. Other works and engagements are generally with disappointments, vexations, and losses ; but in this undertaking, you assure yourselves of the sublimest pleasures, even under the roughest blasts of persecution.

3. You enter a field where there are no labourers, but a very great harvest ; you renounce the pleasures and pursuits of ease, pleasure, ambition, and emolument, where the labourers are seen in crowds, although the harvest is not worth carrying away.

4. To illuminate fallen man, to evangelize and save such as are the immediate objects of your mission ; in the accomplishment of which you must be resolved to serve God, whatever it may cost you, and to confide in him whatever you may suffer, till you rest from your labour and your works follow you.

II. The spirit in which he undertakes it.

1. He must be a man of a good natural understanding, intelligent by grace, and improved by reading and meditation. These endowments, with the love of God, may do great things.

2. Right motives. The finest natural talents, the most eminent literary acquirements ; in a word, all acquisitions, when not directed and animated by mo-

lives approved before the Searcher of Hearts, will be involved in obscurity, and leave their possessors in disgrace. No real dignity of character can be derived from this work, unless concerned for his glory as the Saviour of sinners. It is said of Daniel, *because an excellent Spirit was in him*—he had an uncommon portion of the Spirit of God.

3. A good natural temper is of importance in every department of life, but particularly in this. You, above all men, must not be self-willed, not soon angry, not passionate or peevish, not proud or inaccessible. All that is reputable in manliness, loveliness, or meekness, should prevail in your minds and deportment—various circumstances will, no doubt, concur and combine to try your spirits.

4. Before Christ sent Peter to feed his lambs and sheep, he would have the great question of his sincere and supreme affection for him decided before witnesses; to evince the importance of this inquiry it is three times repeated. Love to Christ is essential to your character—it is your highest ornament, and the great security of your success. As you love Christ, you will speak the truth.

5. Missionaries should be actuated by compassion. *Have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.* Touched with the feeling of human misery, he states the facts which compose the history of redemption—he entreats, expostulates, he weeps and prays—he travels in birth till Christ be formed in them.

6. Let your zeal be according to knowledge, tempered with meekness and simplicity. A meek soul without zeal, is like a ship in a dead calm—and a zealous soul without meekness, is like a ship in a storm; but when these two are united, you will be like a ship amidst the dashing waves in full sail for his destined port, richly laden with the fruits of righteousness.

7. In a missionary we look for zeal and courage—we wish to find him a man of coolness and intrepidity in the midst of dangers, not afraid of giving his blood if called to it in this cause.

8. Let courage be joined with prudence. Consider

the national character of the people with whom you are to dwell—attentively observe their manners, and every peculiarity of natural temper—watch for favourable opportunities, and improve them.

9. Be steadfast and unmovable, &c. As the priests who went before the children of Israel, in their passage through Jordan, and stood in the midst of it till all the people passed over—so you, with firm steps, should lead the way to an eternal inheritance, animating those who observe your obedience to your master's cause, and unshaken confidence in his word.

III. The encouragement this work affords.

1. Your work, with a blessing from above, will prove successful in its *progress*, and infinitely glorious in its *issue*. Do you labour in his work, by his appointment, in his name and strength, and for his glory? Are you workers together with him? Then it is not possible you should labour in vain.

2. All the support you need he will communicate. Apply in full assurance of faith to the Lord Jesus, who will withhold nothing from you which your exigences demand.

3. If your lives, your dangers, and your conflicts are great, realize the danger and misery of perishing souls!

4. Farewell! Go and fulfil our desires, and our hearts and prayers shall be with you.

SERMON XLII.

THE EVIL OF JUDGING RASHLY.

MATT. vii. 1.

Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged.

MEN of the world are apt to accuse the godly with severity in judging them; but, upon inquiry, their chief meaning is, “allow me to live as I list, and I will allow you the same.”

I. What is meant by judging others?

1. Such as a rash and hasty judgment. Too many decide on the conduct and character of others, before they have taken half the time that is necessary to form a tolerable opinion—they judge before they have attentively heard, and sufficiently weighed the case. We should first examine and cross-examine—we should then weigh and deliberate, and if the evidence be in any part defective, we should still suspend our judgment. He who is in haste to decide, has not yet learnt one of the great rules of wisdom, and one important lesson of the gospel, *He that believeth shall not make haste.*

2. A prejudiced and partial judgment. We are all apt to be more or less partial. If a man be of another nation, party, sect, or our rival in trade, or our opponent in any matter, how hard to judge fairly of his conduct—christians should divest themselves of all sinful partiality. Candour is an essential christian virtue. If you judge uncandidly of others, have they not the same right to judge uncandidly of you? If you have your prejudices, may not they have theirs?

3. An hard and severe judgment. We should consider the infirmities there are in men—allow for the force of temptation, and reflect, that we may not be well informed, may not have been acquainted with his bitter repentance. We should make some differ-

ence between deliberate wilful sin, and that which is the effect of surprise—men may fall even into great vices through the sudden assault of their virtue, who otherwise may be bent on a religious course. To infer a man's general character from some particular act, is a grievous offence against this precept.

II. How may rash judging be avoided?

1. Consider in what manner we ourselves expect to be judged by others; we can invent excuses for our own sin, why not for our neighbours?

2. How merciful do we expect God to be at the last day? As we therefore expect to find mercy, so let us shew it. *With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged.*

3. Christ directly adds, *and why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but seest not the beam in thine own?* This shews, they are most apt to see motes in their brother's eye, who have a beam in their own. They who have the least cause to find fault, are often the most forward to do it.

Use.

1. If you resolve to serve God, expect to be severely treated by worldly-minded professors, as well as by a wicked world.

2. If you err through inattention, it will be attributed to a bad design—to deliberate wickedness. Sinners are always more severe than saints.

3. Thou that knowest not God, presume not to judge others. Pride, self-sufficiency, and secret sins, prevent us from seeing our real character.

SERMON XLIII.

THE RETURNS OF PRAYER.

PSALM lxxxv. 8.

I will hear what God the Lord will speak : for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints : but let them not return again to folly.

I. **G**OD's people should expect answers to prayer.

1. The Prophet Habakkuk would not only pray, but stand upon his watch-tower, and see if he will answer.

2. Every faithful prayer is intended as a means to obtain what we pray for.

3. Our speaking to God, and his answers to us, is one great part of our walking with God ; it was said of Samuel, that not one of his words fell to the ground—some say of his prophesy.

4. If you hearken not to the Lord, he will forbear to answer, because he sees it will be in vain. When a man talks to one that listens not, he will soon leave off speaking—so will the Lord.

5. If you observe not the answers of God to your prayers, how will you properly bless his name ? You are to watch unto prayer with thanksgiving.

6. By not listening to God, you will lose much of your comfort. There is no greater joy than to see prayers answered, or to see souls converted, John xvi. 24.

1. To hear from God satisfies the soul abundantly.

2. To know God accepts our works fulfils his promises.

3. This shews God and us are of one mind.

II. How may the influence of prayer be discovered ?

1. If our heart sympathize with others, then our voice is heard. Prayer is melodious music in the ears of God.

2. God often shews men that their own prayers often contribute towards the obtaining of his will. How?

1. By so ordering his answers, that they who prayed most fervently for it, shall have the first news of it.

2. By filling the heart with great joy in the accomplishment of what was so earnestly prayed for.

3. When God gives you a thankful heart for others, this is a sign that your prayers are accepted.

When is prayer *acceptable*?

1. When God stirs us up to pray.

2. When he quiets and calms the heart.

3. When he reveals himself.

4. When God gives faith in what we pray for, and upholds the heart in full expectation.

5. In answers to prayer God's hand is seen; yea, he sometimes shews half a miracle in executing them.

6. When God makes all means conspire to that end, and especially when he doth it suddenly and powerfully.

III. The effects of prayer.

1. It draws the heart nearer to God.

2. It enlarges and fills the heart with thankfulness.

3. It encourages us to pray more fervently and confidently.

4. These answers make us careful in paying our vows.

5. We see and acknowledge the hand of God.

6. It brings us assurance of God's love and favour.

7. Things obtained by prayer are a blessing, and adds no sorrow.

8. Prayer does not move God as an orator, but as a father.

IV. Hindrances.

1. *Slothfulness*. To be cold teaches them we sue to deny us.

2. Relapses into sin. This hinders answers.

SERMON XLIV.

ON WALKING WITH GOD.

GEN. V. 24.

And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

1. **T**HIS chapter gives the genealogy from Adam to Noah.

2. It is said Adam lived so long and begat sons, but of others it is said, they lived and begat sons and daughters, and then died.

3. They are all briefly mentioned, till he comes to Enoch, where it is not only mentioned how long he lived and begat sons and daughters, and died, but addeth, *Enoch walked with God*; as if God should say, he was the delight of my soul, he walked with me.

4. Enoch was a prophet, he conversed with God, who revealed much of his mind to him. Jude says, 14th verse, Enoch prophesied, saying, *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, &c.*

I. Walking with God.

1. It sometimes signifies some special ministration before the Lord, as in 1 Sam. ii. 30—35, *I said indeed, that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever.* In Gen. vi. 9, it is said, Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, viz. he walked with God in the way of righteousness and holiness.

2. The word rendered *He walked with God*, in the Hebrew it is, That he had this testimony, *that he pleased God.* *He pleased God*, means, *he walked in the fear of God*, viz. he served or laboured in the truth before the Lord. Some think that Enoch was a wicked man during the 63 years before he begat Methusalem, because in those years there was no mention made of his walking with God.

II. God's testimony of Enoch—He walked with God.

1. Walking with God is so high an excellence, that no higher testimony can be given of a man in this world; as if God should say, this is the delight of my soul. It is said of Noah, that he was *just and perfect*; but of Enoch it is said, *He walked with God*. It is excellent for God to say, that he walks with him. A man may seem to walk with God, when he is in his duties, and yet have his own designs and ends, but of Enoch God says, *He walked with him*.

2. This phrase, walking with God, is expressed in scripture in divers other phrases which are to the same purport, as *walking before God*, Gen. xxiv. 40. God told Abraham to *walk before him and be upright*. And in Psalm cxvi. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living*. Hezekiah said, *Remember how I have walked before thee*. In Deut. xiii. 4, it is said, *Ye shall walk after the Lord*. As a child after his father, step by step, Micah iv. 5, said, *We will walk in the name of the Lord our God*.

III. What is it to walk with God?

1. Every one by nature goes astray from God, Psalm lviii. 3. They are estranged from the womb speaking lies. The way in which men naturally walk is the way of death, the way of their own hearts, their own councils—it is the common course of the world to walk after the flesh. But the work of God in bringing the soul to walk with him, is, to cause it to make a stop in the way it naturally walks in, inquiring, where am I? What is my way? Whither am I going? Is my way likely to end well? This causes some fear of proceeding, lest it should lead to endless ruin.

2. The Lord shews the soul the way of life, as when a light shined about Saul of Tarsus, which caused him to stop, and proceed no farther. Isaiah says, xxx. 21. *Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it*. Thus the Lord gives a mighty turn to the soul, by that secret voice of his Spirit.

3. The Lord makes peace between him and the sinner, by bringing about a reconciliation. *Man is*

naturally at enmity till this reconciliation takes place. The Holy Ghost saith of Enoch, that it was by faith, that he thus walked with God. There must be a work of faith to bring the soul to walk with God—by this we stand and walk.

4. Though there may be a peace made, yet there may be some strangeness after peace is made. There should not only be peace, but familiar converse, as a child with its father. Sanctification renders God always peaceful, sweet, pleasant, and familiar. It is one thing not to fear his wrath, and another to apprehend the sweet delightful countenance of God, and to be embraced in the arms of his mercy and love. Thus God deals with such in a familiar way; he delights in such, is their friend, and delights to deal with them in a familiar way.

5. The Lord gives his Holy Spirit to guide into all truth. As a father, when walking with his child, gives it his hand, and so they walk together: as when a father and the child walk in the garden, the father puts forth his finger, and the child takes hold of it, and so walks along with him—thus God puts forth his hand and leads him, and so they walk together. Being led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God.

6. Christ, the Son of God, takes the soul and brings it to God the Father, as the Spirit leads, so Jesus Christ brings the soul to the Father, and renders them familiar together, Ephes. ii. 18. *Through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* No sinner can walk with God, but Christ must walk with him. Christ has him by one hand, and God the Father by the other, and thus the soul walks safely between the Father and the Son.

II. How must the soul behave itself in this walk?

1. If walking he must set God before him, and consider him at his right hand, lest he should be moved. A soul thus walking with God, scarce eyes any thing else; for even when it enjoys the creatures, yet the eye is upon God continually. To all true believers Christ is the fairest among ten thousand.

2. The soul behaves as in God's presence, and carries itself accordingly. When we come to do any

thing, we do it as of God, in the sight of God, knowing that we are always before him. Would you know a saint, you shall find him all the day long in the fear of God : yea, you may know him by his gait. Solomon saith, Prov. xxxiii. 17, “ Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

SERMON XLV.

ON CHRIST'S WISDOM AND STATURE.

LUKE ii. 52.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

IN these words, two things are observable.

1. Christ's growth, both as to body and soul. “ He increased in wisdom and stature.”

2. The consequence of it : He attracted the love of God, and the love of men.

I. Shew that Christ's nature, consisting of body and soul, did grow, improve, and increase.

1. There are two distinct natures in the person of Christ—divine and human : the one *infinite* and *uncreated* ; the other *created* and *finite*. He is of the seed of David, and yet declared to be the Son of God. The man, God's *fellow* : a child, yet the everlasting *Father* : born at Bethlehem, yet from everlasting : the bud and word of the Lord, and yet the fruit of the earth.

According to this double nature, must his growth be determined : not of the divine nature, for to the perfection of that, nothing could be added ; an infinite thing cannot increase. He knew God and all things.

2. In his human nature there are two parts, his *body* and his *soul*. He grew in both. As to his growing, herein there is *difficulty* : but as to his soul, the doubt is, whether he grew really, or in manifestation only. Some think his soul grew in wisdom, as his body in stature ; so that he daily became a more eminent person in the eyes of all.

3. It is not said, he grew in grace, but in wisdom. To want degrees in grace, cannot be without sin ; at least, without some defect. Christ, our High-priest, was *holy, harmless, and undefiled*, and separate from sinners : yet his knowledge, as man, was perfected by degrees. It is said, he was ignorant of the day of judgment, Mark xiii. 32. His *divine* nature knew all things ; but not so his human. Some say, he knew it not to *reveal* it.

4. This wisdom may be understood thus. 1. There is habitual *knowledge*, and the actual apprehension of things. Christ had the root of all knowledge, from his very conception ; but the actual knowledge came afterwards. He had the spirit of wisdom, and promptness of understanding ; but the act of knowing is as occasion is offered. 2. There is also a knowledge of generals, when singulars are not actually known. So Christ was deceived in the fig-tree, Matt. xxi. 19. And he inquired for Lazarus's grave. John ii. 34. 3. There is a knowledge *intensive* and *extensive*. Intensive, a clear knowledge ; extensive, to more objects than one. Christ grew in both these : he grew as to clearness of *apprehension*, and as he knew more objects. 4. There is a knowledge infused and experimental. He learned obedience by what he *suffered*. As Christ's capacity enlarged, so his wisdom discovered itself. The divine did but shew itself by degrees, lest it should not be suited to its dispensation.

II. The consequence of this growth : He *increased in wisdom and favour with God and man* ; viz. he obtained a testimony of the favour of God, and the general love and good-will of men. The same was said of Samuel, 1 Sam. ii. 26, *And the child Samuel grew, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men.*

How can we find favour both with God and man, since they who please God are hated by the world?

1. We ought so to live, that we may be pleasing to God, and acceptable to men. We must provide just and holy things, that bad men may not reproach us.

2. There is a difference between convincing men, and having a testimony in their consciences, and humouring them in their sins. To buy men's approbation by the neglect of our duty, is buying it at a dear rate.

3. Though many embrace not the way of godliness, yet they admire it, Prov. xii. 26. The unrighteous Herod feared John the Baptist, knowing that he was a just and holy man.

How far may it be lawful to seek the approbation of men? John v. 44.

1. We must not cast off all respects to a good name, Prov. xxii. 1. *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.* The credit of religion depends much on the characters of those who profess it; yea, ministers are required to have a good report of them that are without. Why so? Because men make shipwreck of a *good name*, and then of a good conscience: and he that is lavish of his credit, is but seldom otherwise of his conscience. Infamy and showers of slander, are forerunners of grievous storms of mischief and *persecution*. The devil is first a liar, and then a murderer. Since our credit is a part of our security and protection against violence, it must not be slighted.

2. The first motive should be, the favour of God, 2 Cor. v. 11. It should be made manifest to God: This is a subsequent of well-doing.

3. The favour of men is the fruit of God's favour. This he gives by his secret counsels to the hearts of men. Prov. xvi. 7. God can either bridle men's *rage*, or dispose them to shew us favour. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." It is God that raises us up friends, even when we seem to be destitute and lost to ourselves.

4. The glory of God, the honour of the gospel, and

the safety of religion, which should be our chief aim in these things, must not be slighted. Matt. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

III. What wisdom is requisite to increase in this favour with God and man ?

1. In general, an innocent, holy conversation, is that which procureth a good name, and respect with God and man. Pet. iii. 10. "That whereas they speak evil of you, as evil doers, they may be convinced by your chaste conversation, coupled with fear."

2. By making conscience of good morals, rather than rituals. Piety, justice, and charity, then carry their own evidence along with them, and speak in the consciences of men.

3. Love, kindness, and gentleness are very taking in the world, and our religion recommends them to us. To be good, should be our constitution ; and to do good, the business of our lives.

Use.

1. Let us get and increase this heavenly wisdom.

2. Let us not offend men unnecessarily.

3. Jesus Christ grew in wisdom ; so should we.

4. Ignorance from natural defect is no sin ; for Christ was ignorant in some things, especially in childhood. Ignorance may arise from the following causes.

1. From want of revelation, Deut. xxix. 29. 2. From the sublimity or excellency of the matter to be known, above our capacity. Psalm cxxxi. 1. Again, 3. From neglect of the means God hath given to men for improvement in knowledge.

Lastly. From natural defect, as in mad *people*, and *naturals*, and for a time, even children. Now, for this defect, man is not charged at the last great day. Hence, God accepteth according to what a man hath, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

SERMON XLVI.

ON GOOD CONVERSATION.

PROV. X. 20.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver.

I. **S**HEW that good men will discourse to edification.

1. We are all naturally unjust and polluted.
2. But a just man is understanding in the things of God.
3. He has been deeply humbled for his offences.
4. He has accepted of Christ, and been justified by faith.
5. He is renewed in his mind by the Spirit of God.
6. He is filled with love, and has his heart in heaven.

II. How is his tongue as choice silver?

1. It is refined from dross. The tongue shews the heart: *He that offendeth not in word, the same is a perfect man.* St. James.

What words should we avoid?

1. All lying words: Truth is the ground of commerce. Lying is contrary to the new nature. Col. iii. 9. It is also contrary to simplicity and holiness, which is the fruit of conversion and regeneration.

2. All railing words: Accordingly all censoriousness and calumny. Speak not of other's blemishes, infirmities, divulging their secrets without any reason from the glory of God.

3. All ribaldry: Let no corrupt, scurrilous, obscene discourse proceed out of your mouths; because it ill becomes them that profess to enjoy a clean heart. Ephes. iv. 29.

4. All proud and arrogant speaking: This is very improper; as, when all our discourse is a self-boasting, merely to set off themselves.

5. All profane words; viz. either wishing some.

evil, or appealing to God in our common discourse. The name of God should not be worn threadbare, but used cautiously.

6. Scorning and deriding words at the power of godliness : When you see others make conscience of sin, it is dreadful in you to make a mock of it. Prov. xiv. 9.

7. All idle discourse, which neither tends to the glory of God, nor the good of our neighbour. Matt. xii. 36. *For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account.* Light words weigh heavy in God's balance.

III. Why should we be thus careful of our words ?

1. Our tongue is our glory ; thereby we express the conceptions of our minds. Acts ii. 26. *My heart did rejoice, and my tongue was glad.*

2. Holy discourse tends to mutual improvement. "The wise in heart shall be called prudent." What light the stars receive from the sun, they bestow on this lower world.

3. It is very quickening to the soul, to confer on good things ; it enlivens our devotion, and makes us pray and praise God cheerfully, and press on to greater heights of grace.

4. This argues a good state of grace ; as, what people greatly love, they will oft converse about. He that offendeth not in word, the same is a perfect man. James iii. 2.

Use.

1. What a happiness to converse with the godly.

2. Let us order our discourse to the benefit of others.

3. How necessary to be thus careful and helpful to others.

4. Let us read, pray, and praise God, so as to benefit others.

5. Let us get our tongues touched with a live coal from heaven.

SERMON XLVII.

ON FAITHFUL REPROOF.

LEV. xix. 17.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

I. **R**EMOVE an impediment of hating our brother.

1. Endeavour to shew them their sin and danger.
2. Strive to bring them to true repentance.
3. If we do not reprove and rebuke, we hate our brother.
4. If it abide, it will be in danger of ingendering into malice.
5. Zeal for God, and love to our neighbour, will help us.

II. The object of reproof: thy neighbour.

Christ shews who is our neighbour, by the Samaritan. Offices of love must be shewed to enemies, as well as friends.

1. By the law of charity, we owe this office to all. Neither age, sex, nor condition of life, can excuse or exempt us from this duty.

2. This duty we owe particularly to all the members of Christ, and especially to those of our own church.

3. Some more so, as relations and intimates.

III. How should this work be done?

1. Do it faithfully, freely, plainly, and yet sharply, so that they may be sound in the faith.

2. Do it with lenity and christian meekness; not with passion, but compassion. Gal. vi. 1. We must not strive to reproach and disgrace, but to reform and mend them.

3. Do it prudently. All circumstances should be

well weighed, viz. time and place. Let all things be done decently, in good order, and to a good end.

4. Reproof should not be too rash and heavy, lest it tear and rend, rather than benefit and adorn the person.

IV. The great necessity of this duty.

1. If we neglect it, we are in danger of bearing punishment for them, whom we reprove not. "His blood will I require at the watchmen's hands." Ezek. xxxiii. 6.

2. Because of the good that cometh thereby—the glory of God, and the gaining of a brother: and the gaining of one soul is of vast importance.

3. Reproof increases knowledge: it saddens the heart for a time, but is beneficial in the end.

4. It may prevent backbiting and detraction; so that without it, no society can be kept.

Use.

1. If we reprove others, let us take care that we be blameless ourselves.

2. If others are to take reproof, so are we.

3. This duty is needful from human nature.

4. To do it well, knowledge, zeal, love, and courage, are all necessary.

SERMON XLVIII.

THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

ROM. ii. 7.

To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, immortality, and eternal life.

I. **T**HE thing to be sought: *Glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life.*

1. Glory: Great excellence. The glory of this world fadeth away; but the glory of that to come, will never fade away. The saints' glory concerns both their persons and estates: their persons shall be like Christ's; and their state, they shall be exalted to a throne.

2. Honour: This imports praise and exultation. Honour is a testimony of excellency. To seek worldly honour, destroys faith; but the honour Christ puts upon the saints in heaven, is the object of their faith. Christ will own them, commend them, confess their faith, and crown them for ever.

3. Immortality: viz. incorruption. The glory of the saints is immortal; it never fadeth, never withereth. This glory will abide with them, and they with it, world without end—for ever and ever.

4. Eternal life: viz. The enjoyment and fruition of heaven—all that happiness and glory that can possibly be conceived, in that upper and bright world.

5. Christ's saints will be commended, and gloriously rewarded; so that their honours will be manifold.

III. The way to obtain it: *They seek it.*

1. By an hearty desire: Seeking is the earnest desire after a thing lost, or absent. Col. iii. 1. *Seek those things which are above.* This must prevail above the desire of all earthly things.

2. It implies diligence, and earnest endeavours,

like the woman who had lost her piece of money. It is called labour, working, striving, and pressing towards the mark for the prize of our high calling. They are not idle wishes that will obtain it.

3. They must endeavour, by all possible seriousness in the use of all the means of grace, to obtain the end—eternal life.

4. They must seek it by faith; as faith realizes unseen things. They now see through a glass darkly, but ere long they shall see face to face.

III. The way to secure it: *Patient continuance in well doing.*

1. Well doing: viz. To act agreeably to those obligations that lie upon us towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves: living *soberly, righteously, and godly in this world.*

To our neighbour, in justice, truth, mercy, and fidelity; in our relations as parents, husbands, wives, children, and servants.

To God, so as to live in subjection to him, dependance upon him, and blessed communion with him.

To others, not only avoiding all wrong, but to do all possible good. Thus to be careful for the body as well as the soul.

2. Continuance in well doing. There may be interruptions, divisions, distractions, and stragglings; but a christian, though he slip, stumble, or step aside, yet he will get into the way again as soon as possible; he will not go back again.

3. A patient continuing. The stony ground was impatient of contradiction and affliction: the thorny ground of delay and reward. Endure hardships here, and look for the reward hereafter. Follow them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

IV. The reward is eternal life.

1. This is a freedom from all evil and misery in estates, names, relations, bodies, and souls. As the body will be free from all weakness, so the soul will be free from all sin; without spot or wrinkle.

2. There will be the possession of all good. God

will be all in all. And this will abide through the ages of eternity—for ever and ever.

Use.

1. Do you seek this in well doing? Examine yourselves.

2. Continue so doing all the days of your pilgrimage on earth.

SERMON XLIX.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

MATT. XXV. 1, 2.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

1. **C**HRIST frequently instructed by parables, to give greater evidence and force to truth; and also, to teach us to draw spiritual advantages from common occurrences.

2. Argumentative parables, are such as shew us what fell out among men, to encourage our converse with God; as that of the unjust judge about prayer, and a woman forgetting her sucking child.

3. Representative parables, shew some heavenly matter composed to earthly things. God speaks to us as we can understand.

I. The thing spoken of: *The kingdom of heaven.*

1. That is, the state of the church wherein God reigneth in the person of the *Messiah*. Of heaven it cannot be meant, because there are no foolish virgins there.

2. This is not restrained to the time when Christ shall come to judgment, but affects us all now; for as

we leave the world, so shall we appear at the great day.

3. This is a kingdom of grace set up in the souls of men; consisting of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

II. The comparison—*like to ten virgins.*

1. The bridegroom is Christ; the bride his church; the whole church his spouse, and every member a virgin, attending upon his spouse.

2. The marriage is promised, and the espousals are in this life. Tertullian saith, "Christ took the token of our flesh to heaven for us, and left us his Spirit to prepare us for heaven;" at last he will receive us to glory.

3. The weddings among the Jews were kept by night, in which the bridegroom and his bride, were, by certain virgins fetched in, and conducted to the bride with lamps in their hands, and songs in their mouths. Gen. xxix. 23. Judg. xiii. 11. Matt. ix. 15.

III. Why called virgins.

1. Virgins, for their chastity, and the purity of their faith, worship, and blameless conversation.

2. The number was ten, either because ten is a perfect number, or because they never exceeded that number.

3. Their distribution in two ranks; some wise, and some foolish. This shews, that all the virgins are not alike careful, to be prepared, to meet their bridegroom.

4. Their works and preparation: they all went forth, expecting his coming; they took their lamps, that is, made an open profession of their faith and hope.

IV. Foolish virgins.

1. Not corrupted members of a degenerate church.

2. Not the scandalous members even of a pure church.

3. No, nor a shew of false counterfeit profession.

4. But a firm assent, and cordial embracing of Christ, but unfortunately not held out to the end.

Use.

1. How far are those from salvation, who make no profession.

2. Let professors take heed they do not deceive themselves.

3. Let not a few signs of grace satisfy the soul.

4. Be serious and earnest in preparing for Christ's coming.

5. Begin betime to get oil in the vessel, and take care the lamp be well trimmed, and constantly burning : yea, and ye yourselves always watching for his coming.

SERMON L.

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

MATT. xii. 31.

All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the sin against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in this world, nor the world to come.

1. **T**HE occasion of these words, was the Pharisees blaspheming against that Divine Power which wrought miracles, and cast out devils.

2. These works they maliciously and obstinately imputed to the power of the devil ; from which Christ takes occasion to shew the danger of this sin, telling them that it was so great, that it is unpardonable.

I. The difference between speaking against the Son of Man, and speaking against the Holy Ghost.

1. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, was speaking against the Son of Man ; for to say he cast out devils by the power of the devil, was both blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, and speaking against

the Son of Man. It was in effect saying, he was no true prophet, but a *magician* and an *impostor*.

2. To speak against the Son of Man, is to speak against Christ in all those reproaches and contumelies which were cast upon our Saviour's person, without reflecting upon that divine power which he testified by his miracles: as, reproaching him with his mean *birth* and *parentage*, and calling him a *wine-bibber*, a *glutton*, and accusing him with *eating with sinners*.

3. By speaking against the Holy Ghost, is meant their blaspheming and reproaching that Divine Power whereby he wrought his miracles; being an immediate reflection upon the Holy Ghost by way of distinction or opposition to the other calumnies they used against Christ, which were proper blasphemies and reproaches of his person, but not of the Holy Ghost also, as this was.

II. The nature of this sin of blaspheming against the Holy Ghost.

1. Some make it to be *final impenitency*; and the more so, because this is *unpardonable*.

2. Others call it a *wilful, obstinate opposition to the truth*, which is both a great sin, and includes this.

3. Others call it a *malicious opposition to the truth*, after *knowing* and being *convinced* it is the truth.

4. Others think it the entire renouncing of the truth, for fear of suffering, which has made some think they have committed it.

5. At the 22nd verse, we read of one who went to Christ being possessed with a devil, who was blind and dumb, and he healed him. The Pharisees said, *This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils*. Upon this, Christ shews the unpardonableness of this sin, on two accounts: First, It was unlikely the devil should lend him this power. Secondly, It would shew his kingdom was divided against itself. Christ asks, *If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges: viz.* This may convince you, it is malice against me.

6. Their blasphemy was plainly this, that when he cast out devils by the Spirit of God, they said he did it by the power of the devil; maliciously ascribing these works of the Holy Ghost to the devil.

7. This sin consisted in a most malicious opposition to the utmost evidence that could be given to the truth of any religion. In Luke xi. 20, he is said to *do these things by the finger of God*; which were undeniable evidences of the power and presence of God. Therefore to deny this, and attribute it to the power of the devil, was not to be forgiven.

III. In what sense this sin is said to be unpardonable.

1. It is not meant that this or any other sin which is not forgiven in this world, shall be in the next.

2. Some think he here alludes to the opinion of the Jews, concerning the effect of the highest excommunication, the sentence they held to be reversible, neither in this world nor in the next.

3. Our Saviour's meaning is, that this sin is incapable of *forgiveness*. Some have added, comparatively, that any sin shall sooner be forgiven. But St. Mark says, shall never have forgiveness. Dr. Hammond modifies it by saying, he shall not be pardoned but upon a *particular repentance for it*. But this by no means agrees with our Saviour's discourse.

3. Christ undoubtedly meant, by saying that all other sin but that against the Holy Ghost, might be forgiven, that this should not; neither here nor hereafter. Therefore those persons, guilty of this sin, shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.

IV. How is this sin incapable above all others of pardon?

1. Because by this sin, men resist their *last* and *best* remedy, and reject and oppose the only means of recovery.

2. Because by this sin, God is so provoked, as justly to withdraw his grace from such persons, without which they must forever remain impenitent and unforgiven.

Use.

1. Do you take comfort who are liable to despair, and may have sometimes been tempted to think you had committed this sin : rest assured you have not.

2. Let every one be cautious of the very approaches to it, being *gradual, imperceptible*, and ruinous : even sin hardens.



SERMON LI.

HOW TO KNOW OUR OWN SPIRITS.

LUKE ix. 55, 56.

Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

1. **W**HAT most of all recommends religion, is its intrinsic worth. Miracles are only evidences of the truth of its divinity.

2. But the morality of its doctrines and precepts tend greatly to sweeten the spirits and tempers of men, producing peace and good order in the world. Miracles bear down the prejudices of infidelity ; but real goodness takes hold of the hearts of men, and commands love and esteem.

4. At the rebuilding of the temple, there arose such a feud betwixt the Jews and Samaritans, which grew so violent, that they could not shew common civility to one another ; for which reason the Samaritans would not receive Christ when on his journey to worship at Jerusalem.

5. At this uncivil treatment to our Saviour, two of his disciples, *James and John*, took fire, and out of zeal for their Master, and of *Jerusalem*, they were for immediately dispatching these out of the way ; since

they desired Christ to give them power to call for fire from heaven to consume them, as Elias had done. These being so near the place where Christ did it, might probably prompt them to it.

Q. Christ seeing them in his heat, calmly, but severely reprov'd this temper of theirs, by saying, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, &c. &c.* Christ came not to destroy men's lives by fierceness, rage and cruelty; but to restrain and subdue their furious spirit; introducing peace and security.

I. To what Christ alluded by saying, *Ye know not what, &c.*

1. He might allude to a *party zeal*, which leads to persecute any who *think* or *act* different to them.

2. The more so, when this is grounded on some personal *interest*, as *emolument*, *honour*, or *dishonour*.

3. When our zeal is attended with cruelty, and would rather have God's justice than his mercy manifested.

4. When zeal goes beyond *knowledge* and *prudence*, it then shews our spirits are not right with God.

5. This wrong spirit leads to despise, censure, and backbite; making all who differ from them *odious*.

6. This spirit tends to distance, divisions, and it feeds contention, and produces party work.

7. It is the complexion of a *weak*, *childish*, *proud*, *self-conceited*, *peevish*, and surly kind of professors.

8. It is always the most dangerous, when it carries men from scripture to pretences of revelation and inspiration.

II. How does this spirit appear wrong, though under pretence of zeal for God?

1. It is directly opposite to the precepts of the gospel, which commands us to love one another, and to be *merciful*, even as our Father which is in heaven is *merciful*.

2. It is directly opposite to the meek and lowly mind of Jesus, who says, *learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart*.

3. This spirit is directly opposite to the conduct of the primitive christians. They caused no feuds, ex-

cept by a close attention to their duty in their Master's spirit.

4. This spirit is utterly inconsistent with the great design of christianity, and the great end of Christ's coming, which was to bring *peace upon earth*.

III. How must this spirit be corrected and rectified?

1. It must be regulated by the word of God: it should be always free from *bigotry*, *ostentation*, and *wrath*.

2. It should be uniform, opposing sin in ourselves, as well as in others: we should all avoid partiality.

3. It should also be discreet, not precipitating us into an unbecoming conduct.

4. It should be tempered with meekness and wisdom: not *positive*, *dogmatical*, and *overbearing*.

5. A zealous person without meekness, is like a ship in a storm, in danger of wrecks; and a meek person without zeal, is like a ship in a calm—it moves not so fast as might be wished.

IV. Application.

1. Let not religion suffer those miscarriages which proceed from ignorance, and from the want of meekness.

2. Let us beware of those people who countenance such a spirit as is condemned by Christ.

3. Let us not call all heretics, who differ from us in matters of opinion not essential to our salvation.

4. Let us encourage ourselves in the Lord, and commit our cause and the keeping of our souls to him in well doing.

SERMON LII.

THE BRUISED REED AND SMOKING FLAX.

MATT. xii. 20.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

1. **C**HRIST possesses all virtues in the highest perfection, which qualifies him to be a just and gracious Governor of the world.

2. The virtues of mortals, when carried to a very high degree, often run into vices; as, "Right too rigid, hardens into wrong." Strict justice steels itself into excessive severity, and the man is lost in the judge.

3. Sometimes goodness and mercy degenerate into softness, inconsistent with good government.

4. In Christ, all these opposites center and harmonize in the highest perfection, without running into extremes. Hence he is characterized both as a Lion and as a Lamb—a Lamb for gentleness towards penitents, and a Lion, to tear his enemies in pieces. Rev. xix. 11. Isai. ix. 6.

I. What by a bruised reed shall he not break?

1. The bruised reed seems naturally to represent a soul at once feeble in itself, and crushed with a burden.

2. The reed is a slender, frail vegetable in itself, and therefore a very proper image to represent a soul that is feeble and weak.

3. A bruised reed is still more frail, hangs its head, and is unable to stand without a prop.

4. This is a lively emblem of a poor soul, not only weak in itself, but bowed down and broken under a load of sin and sorrow, that droops and sinks without divine support. Strength may bear up, and struggle

with, or throw off a load ; but weakness under a burden, what can be more pitiable ?

5. What would become of such a creature, if, instead of raising him up and supporting him, Jesus should tread and crush him under the foot of his indignation ? But Christ will raise it up with a gentle hand.

6. Thus poor broken-hearted penitents, he takes care of you, and supports you, worthless and trifling as you are. Though you seem to lie in the way of his justice, yet he does not crush you, but takes you up, and inspires you with strength to bear your burden, and flourish again.

II. The smoking flax shall he not quench.

1. It seems to be an allusion to the wick of a candle or lamp, the flame of which is put out, but it still smokes, and retains a little fire, which may again be blown into a flame, or kindled by the application of more fire.

2. Many such dying snuffs, or smoking wicks, are to be found in the candlesticks of churches, and in the lamps of the sanctuary. The flame of divine love is just expiring ; it is sunk in the socket of a corrupt heart, and produces no clear blaze, but only a smoke that is disagreeable, although a spark of fire still remains ; or it produces a faint quivering flame that dies away, then catches and revives, and seems unwilling to be quenched entirely.

3. Christ walks among the golden candlesticks, and trims the lamps of his sanctuary. Where he finds empty vessels without oil, or a spark of heavenly fire, like those of the foolish virgins, he breaks the vessels, or throws them out of his house. But where he finds the least spark of heavenly grace, or the least glimpse of sincere love, though just expiring, yet he renders that heart susceptible of divine love, as a candle just put out is easily rekindled. Then he will strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die ; he will blow up the dying snuff to a lively flame, and cause it to shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day.

III. Illustrate the character of believers, by a bruised reed, and smoking flax. This conveys the idea of *weakness* and *oppression*.

1. He finds himself weak in knowledge of divine things; knowing but little, compared to what he ought to know.

2. He is weak in faith; as such, he does not keep a strong hold of Christ; he does not suspend his all upon the promises with a cheerful confidence, nor build a firm, immoveable fabric of hope upon the rock Christ Jesus.

3. He finds himself weak in love; the sacred flame not rising or flaming with perpetual fervour, diffusing itself through all his devotions; but is languid, and ready to die away like a smoking snuff.

4. He is weak in hope; his hope being dashed with every rising billow of fear and jealousy, and seems just overset.

5. He is weak in joy; not being able to extract the sweets of christianity, nor taste the comforts of his religion.

6. He is weak in zeal for God, and the interests of his kingdom. He would wish himself always a flaming seraph, always glowing, always unwearied in the service of God, and promoting the designs of redeeming love.

7. He is also weak and feeble, and weak in repentance, and often troubled with the plague of a hard heart, which is unfeeling, dry, and dead.

8. He is weak in resisting temptation and indwelling corruption, which crowd in upon him from within and without, which often seem ready to overcome and overwhelm him.

9. He is weak in courage to encounter the king of terrors, and venture through the valley and shadow of death.

10. Weak in prayer, viz. in importunate and filial boldness, so as to approach the throne of grace with becoming confidence.

11. He feels himself weak in abilities to encounter the conversion of sinners, and save souls from death. In short, he is weak in every thing in which he should

be strong: he has indeed a little strength, but it seems too little for his work.

These weaknesses he painfully and tenderly feels, and bitterly laments. A sense of them keeps him low and humble. He is not venturesome in rushing upon the combat. A sense of his weakness keeps him dependant on divine strength. St. Paul said, *When I am weak, then am I strong.*

IV. A smoking flax.

The metaphor is taken from a candle just blown out, which still smokes, and retains a feeble spark of fire. Such is true grace in a sincere heart, but languishing, and just ready to expire: and it might be added, it is like a candle just put out, and which is easily rekindled.

This may lead us to shew religion in a low degree, or to delineate the christian in his most languid moments.

1. The weak christian sometimes falls into such a state of carelessness, stupidity, and insensibility; that he has but superficial exercises of mind about divine things; but yet he feels an uneasiness, an emptiness, and an anxiety within, under which he droops and pines away; but yet all the world cannot heal his disease; all created enjoyments are insipid.

2. Sometimes his anxiety is indistinct and confused, and he hardly knows what ails him; but at other times, it is for God—yea, the living God he is panting after. The evaporation of this smoking flax naturally ascends towards heaven. Turn which way he will, he can find no solid *rest* but in Christ and religion.

3. Even at these times, he cannot be reconciled to sin. He may parley with it in an unguarded hour, and seem as if negotiating a peace; but the truce is soon broke, and they are at variance again. What remains of the new heart, soon rises against the old enemy; principally arising from a sense of its intrinsic baseness, ingratitude, and its contrariety to the holy nature of God.

4. At these times, he is jealous of his sincerity, and afraid that all his past experience was delusive,

and that would he die in this state, he would be eternally miserable; and he verily shudders at the thought of everlasting punishment.

5. Weak believers are sometimes driven by the tempests of evil desires and temptations from the rock Jesus Christ: but he endeavours to lay hold upon it, and recover his station. He is sensible there is no other foundation. He yet retains a sort of tendency towards him, like the needle to the loadstone towards the Pole. If his heart is turned from its course, it trembles and grieves till it fixes to the right point again.

6 In short, the weakest christian feels that his comfort rises and falls, as he lives nearer to, or farther from his God. Yea, the weakest christian longs to be delivered from sin—from all sin without exception. The weak believer is yet charmed with holiness, and he would rather die, than yield himself a tame slave to the usurped tyranny again.

V. Christ's care and compassion for such poor weaklings.

1. The Lord has a peculiar tenderness for poor broken-hearted mourners, as he is said to be *anointed to preach good tidings to the meek*, and to bind up the broken-hearted. Isai. lxi. 1.

2. Again he stoops to encourage us by saying, *To this man will I look, that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*, Isai. lxvi. 2. And let heaven and earth wonder, that he will fix his eye upon a contrite, broken-hearted creature.

3. He charges Peter to *feed his lambs*, as well as *his sheep*; viz to take the tenderest care, even of the weakest of his flock. John xxi. 15. And he sharply rebukes the shepherds of Israel, because they had not strengthened the diseased, or healed that which was sick, nor bound up that which was broken.

4. Isaiah tells us, that he also comes to shew mercy to the meanest of his people. *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young*. Shewing, that he shall

exercise the tenderest care towards the meanest of his flock. Isai. x. 11.

5. None of the seven churches were so commended by Christ, as that of Philadelphia; and yet in commending her, all he can say is, *Thou hast a little strength*.—Oh how acceptable to Christ is a little strength! and how ready is he to improve it! He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Isai. xl. 29.

6. Hear also what Christ saith: *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matt. xi. 28, 29. What exceeding great and precious promises are these, and what strong consolation they bring to the drooping soul!

VI. How people in all ages have found these promises good.

1. David says, *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard, and delivered him out of all his troubles*. Ps. xxxiv. 6.

2. St. Paul, in the midst of affliction, calls God *the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who comforteth those that are cast down, in all their tribulation*, 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. He is not only stiled *the Lord of Hosts*, but *the Comforter of the humble*. Such St. Paul found him in the hour of temptation: *My grace is sufficient for thee*.

3. Again, St. Paul seems quite regardless what infirmities he laboured under; for, says he, *Nay, most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*. He could not so much take pleasure in feeling himself weak, as the pleasure he found in leaning upon his Almighty support. His wounds were painful; but to feel this divine Physician to dress them, in some measure swallowed up the pain.

Use.

1. Poor trembling, doubting souls, what hinders you from raising up your drooping heads? You may safely venture your souls into such compassionate and faithful hands as Christ's. Why should the bruised reed shrink from him, when he comes not to tread it down, but to raise it up?

2. Do not indulge causeless doubts and fears concerning your sincerity. When they arise, examine them; and if there be not sufficient reason for them, reject and set them at defiance, and entertain your hopes in spite of them, and say with the Psalmist, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul; hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.*

SERMON LIII.

ON LOVING GOD WITH ALL THE HEART.

MATT. xxii. 37, 38.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

I. **W**HAT is meant by loving God with all the heart.

1. Love is an affection of union, whereby we desire or enjoy perpetual union with the thing enjoyed. Divine love is always in an extreme.

2. It is the unspeakable enlargement of the heart towards God—yea, it is the soul's losing itself in God, so as that the heart is ever working towards him.

3. Divine love in man is the ravishment of the heart in God—in this work every faculty is engaged. It is like the iron to the loadstone; slow when at a distance, but quick when near.

4. Our love to God is like the love of the flower of the sun to the sun. It springs from a very little root; it is not only our faith but our love that is at first like a grain of mustard-seed—it grows the fastest of any other flower.

5. It is like the love of the turtle to her mate; God's

people are his beloved ones—they live and die in the embraces of each other.

6. It is like Jacob's love to Benjamin, who would rather starve than part with Benjamin; yea, when hunger forced him away, Judah offers to purchase his liberty as his own, because his father's life was bound up in the lad's life. So the soul that loves God will not bear the thought of parting—his life is bound up in the presence of God.

II. How must this be done?

Our love to God is nothing else but the echo of God's love to us.

1. The only efficient cause of our loving God, is God himself—so the only procuring cause of our loving God is Jesus Christ, that Son of the Father's love, who, by his Spirit, implants and actuates this grace of love which Christ merited for us, Col. i. 20.

2. Directing spiritual knowledge to a right end, and the knowledge of ordinary things in a spiritual manner, so as to make the knowledge of natural things serve spiritual and heavenly purposes.

III. Helps towards this duty.

1. Self-denial.—This is so exceeding necessary, that no other grace can supply the want of it.

2. Contempt of the world.—This may be best expressed by our worldly diffidence. We have no confidence in the world, consequently no happiness from it.

3. Observation of God's benefits to us.—It is goodness and beneficence that draws out love. God is our infinite benefactor—the very brutes love their benefactors.

4. Watchfulness and jealousy over our own hearts. When we love God, we should remember that we love a jealous God.

5. All manner of prayer is singularly useful to influence the heart with love to God. Those that pray most love God best. Take no denial, God will not be angry with your importunity.

6. Heavenly meditation—a duty as much talked of, and as little practised as any duty of christianity.

7. Choice of good christian friends, and all of them well improved with grace.

8. He that makes conscience of thanksgiving, will thereby grow in this love.

IV. When may we be said to love him with all our heart ?

1. When we love him with all the powers of the soul—the understanding, will, affections, memory, and all the powers of the mind. If we perfectly love any one, all things about him please us. God as much abominates partnership in love, as any husband or wife abhors it in their conjugal relation.

2. There must be an ardency of affection ; as whatever we do, it must be for his sake, and according to his will. To love God with all the heart, is to subject all those works that pertain to an animal life unto the love of God. We must so love God as to be ready to lay down our lives for him, if it be required.

3. To love God with all the mind, is to have the understanding moved and commanded by the love of God. Let nothing go in or out of the mind, but what pays tribute to the love of God. We must be always conversing with God in our minds—our thoughts must kindle our affections of love ; love makes hard things easy. St. Mark says, with all thy strength, viz. with all the powers of soul and body, understanding, will, affections, memory, senses, appetite, speech, and all our powers.

V. Why is this so important a duty ?

1. Christ says, *This is the first and great commandment of all*. Therefore this is absolutely necessary in respect of the object, it is God—the first and chief good.

2. It is the first and great commandment in respect of obligation. To love God is a duty so indispensable, that even God himself cannot dispense with this duty not being complied with.

3. It is the first and great commandment in respect to the matter of it. Love to God is the most excellent of all graces ; love among the graces, is like the sun among the stars, which not only enlightens this

lower world, but communicates light to all the stars in the firmament.

4. It is the first in respect to the largeness of it. This requires the whole man, heart, soul, strength. Whatever else we entertain, some other room may be good enough for it, but let the heart be kept for God's peculiar presence chamber.

5. It is first in respect to its capacity, because it contains all other commands ; no man can love his neighbour unless he love God, and no man can love God but he must love his neighbour.

6. It is the first in respect to the difficulties of it ; because through our infirmities we cannot presently love God—the prime difficulty is, the spirituality of it. This wisdom is too high for wicked sinners.

7. It is the first in respect to the end. All the others are referred to this as their end and last work, which was first in the mind of the lawgiver.

8. It is the first in respect to the lastingness of it, as most of the other commands expire with the world, but this remains and flourishes for ever.

VI. Impediments to this love.

1. Self-love. This is Captain-General of the devil's army. In the dregs of the last days this will make the times dangerous, men shall be lovers of themselves. Then be suspicious of every thing that may steal away or divert your love to Christ.

2. Love to the world. When men will be somebody in the world, and have estates, honours, and pleasures. What variety of vexatious distractions do unavoidably hinder our love to God, when our hearts are hurried with hopes and fears about worldly things, and yet the world hath not wherewithal to satisfy us.

3. Spiritual sloth and carelessness. Love is a busy passion, a busy grace ; love among the passions, is like fire among the elements. Love among the graces is like the heart among the members. Sloth is a soft moth in our spiritual wardrobe—a corroding rust in our spiritual armoury—an enfeebling consumption in the very vitals of religion. Spiritual sloth, in general, doth the soul more harm than all the devils in hell,

yea, than all its other sins. Shake off this, and then you will be more than conquerors.

4. Love of sin. The love of God and sin can no more mix together than iron and clay—every sin strikes at the being of God. The best of saints may possibly fall into the worst of sins, but the least of saints get above the least sins. We question God's love to us as Delilah did Samson's to her, if he do not gratify us in all we want : but how could Delilah pretend love to Samson, while she complied with his mortal enemies? You cannot love God if you love sin, or hide it in your hearts.

5. Inordinate love of things even lawful. It is not easy to discern the utmost bounds of what is lawful, and the first step towards that which is sinful ; and here, having some plausible pretences for parcelling out their love, they plead not guilty, although they love not God with their whole hearts.

SERMON LIV.

ON LOVING OUR NEIGHBOUR AS OURSELVES.

MATT. xxii. 39.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

I. **W**HO is our neighbour?

1. Not only he who lives near our habitation, in the same street, city, country, or nation, but every man, of what place or nation soever he be ; whether he be one of our acquaintance or a stranger, a friend or an enemy. Thus Christ informed the young lawyer.

2. How could we think, that God would require us to bring back a straggling ox, and to relieve an ass, oppressed with his burden, and lay no duty on us to a

man in the same situation. We see then who is our neighbour—it is any man whosoever, friend, or enemy, that lives near us, or a great way from us.

II. The lawfulness of a man's loving himself.

1. A man may love his own body, and is bound to preserve the life of it. The Lord forbad the Israelites to make such barbarous cuttings and manglings of their flesh, (after the manner of the heathens) because they were his servants.

2. A man may and ought chiefly to love his own soul. Every man's desire should be, that it may be well with his better part, both here and hereafter.

3. No man can love himself, or his neighbour aright, while he remains in a state of sin; until a man come to himself, or any other man as he ought, unless he love God. When the Prodigal came to himself, and not till then, he said, I will return to my Father.

III. How must we love our neighbour as ourselves?

1. With the same kind of thoughts and judgment as we pass upon ourselves.

2. The same kind of speeches as we would use concerning ourselves, the same must we use of others.

3. We should feel the same desires for another's happiness, as we do for our own happiness.

4. Yea, our actual endeavours should be as willing and cheerful as even for ourselves. Thus should we shew our love to others: and the Apostle chargeth us to *speake evil of no man*.

When are men evil spoken of?

1. When they are censured for that for which they ought to be commended.

2. When men raise false reports, or set them forward when others have maliciously raised them.

3. There may be evil speaking, in speaking of such evils as others are really guilty of.

How is this done?

1. When men industriously search out such things as are evil in others for this very purpose, that they may have something to say against them.

2. When they will rather bring others into sin than want matter against them.

3. When a man makes a fault greater than it is, re-

presenting a mole-hill as big as a mountain, thinking that he can never aggravate another's fault too much.

4. When men speak of other's sins in mirth, and with some kind of rejoicing, as if tickled and pleased with it, all this rejoicing is evil and vain.

5. When men speak of another's fault to gratify their own humour, or to please others, or to lay the person spoken of open to contempt.

IV. The manner of loving ourselves, being the same manner we ought to love others.

1. We should love ourselves with a holy and pure affection. We ought not to have any separate interest from God, though he allows us to love ourselves, it must be in subordination to him and to his glory.

2. Our love to ourselves should be orderly—we must chiefly love our souls, and then our bodies: a world of things for the body will stand in no stead, if the soul be lost.

How should this be done?

1. Seek our neighbour's conversion, lest their souls be lost for ever. If we can be instrumental in this, herein we shew the greatest love.

2. We shew our love by seeking the increase of their faith, love, holiness, and comfort.

3. It should go out freely—what we have at hand we are ready to take freely, when we stand in need of it. If our neighbour need a gift from us, we should freely open our hearts to supply their wants according to the ability which God hath given us.

4. No man useth to dissemble with himself, no more should we dissemble with others. If blessing be only in the mouth, cursing is not likely to be far from the heart.

5. We love ourselves sincerely, truly, and fervently, so should we always love our neighbour.

6. We love ourselves very tenderly. If the body be pained, how tender are we of it, so much so, that the eye will look to it carefully, and the hand will diligently keep off hurtful things.

7. We should so love others, that when we see them under sufferings, we should be so tender as to have a quick sense of them in ourselves.

V. The degree of love to our neighbour.

1. Not as much as, but like as. A man is bound to love his neighbour so as to hazard his own life to save the life of his neighbour, who would otherwise perish, if he did not hazard himself in his behalf.

2. We ought to love our neighbour more or less, according to the degrees wherein every one excels another, as in the following particulars:—

1. There are natural gifts, as wisdom and understanding. This is beneficial to mankind, in general.

2. There are moral endowments, by which men become more useful members of society.

3. There are holy qualifications of the soul, from a more than common work of the Spirit upon the hearts of men.

VI. The principal objects of our love.

1. Those in the greatest misery.

2. The poor members of Jesus Christ.

3. The household of faith in general.

4. Our own household and our near kindred.

5. They who are God's enemies and ours.

Lastly. Let us unite all that is good in the world, particularly to promote the interests of Christ and religion.

SERMON LV.

ON THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

2 CHRON. XXIX. 11.

My sons, be not now negligent: for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him and burn incense.

I. **T**HE pastoral office.

1. The first duty of this office is to *preach the word*. The law must be preached as well as the gospel.

2. Preach the leading doctrines, such as the atonement of Christ, justification by faith, and the fruits of the Spirit. We must likewise insist on the duties incumbent on believers, though mistaken men should charge us with being legal preachers.

3. We must divide the word of truth aright; aim at preserving the proportion of faith, or giving to each truth that place which it has in the Bible.

4. Prayer is another eminent part of the minister's duty—he is to *stand before the Lord*, presenting unto God the prayers and praises of the people.

5. The administration of the sacraments is so necessary, and so essential to the being and welfare of a christian church, that all possible gravity, decency, spirituality, and zeal are highly requisite.

6. Catechising the young is a necessary duty, and has the most happy tendency, without any lasting good.

7. Visiting from house to house, which should be performed with great wisdom, piety, and prudence.

II. The necessity of diligence in these duties.

1. We must not wonder if carnal worldly ministers are careless and negligent; but spiritual ministers should be careful, and not sink into supineness, carnal ease, and indulgence.

2. We must be on our guard, lest discouragements retard us—let not our hearts be remiss in our duty.

If after long continued efforts for our people they remain the same stupid, ignorant, worldly creatures as before, we must not suffer ourselves hereby to be lulled into a sleepy and negligent frame.

3. The sloth of others may have a bad effect upon us. We are too apt to satisfy ourselves with that portion of zeal which satisfies our neighbours.

4. Diligence in the ministry, not only includes in it our preparations for the pulpit, but also a becoming exertion in the pulpit.

5. Every minister is not an orator, yet when a minister's whole soul is in his work, when he deeply feels the powers of the world to come, and deals with men as for eternity, there is a kind of eloquence that is almost irresistible, and the hearers are constrained to say of such a man, *God is with him of a truth.*

6. There must be frequency in the exercise of this duty—be diligent in season and out of season—embrace every open door.

III. Stir one another up to this duty.

1. Consider the value of immortal souls.

2. The nature and importance of the pastoral office.

3. How much your own advantage is concerned herein.

4. Anticipate the day when the work will be done, and when the reward will certainly follow.

5. Let us all prepare to meet that day with joy.

SERMON LVI.

ON FAITHFUL REPROOF.

PSALM cxli. 5.

Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness : and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.

I. **T**HE nature of reproof.

1. It signifies to argue, dispute, and contend, as well as to reprove, rebuke, or reprehend.

2. It respects a fault, an evil, a miscarriage, or a sin in them that are reproofed.

3. Reproving is not left arbitrarily unto the wills of men—it would come short of his efficacy without this. No wise man will reprove but when it is his duty.

4. Reproofs, if rightly received and duly improved, are a mercy and advantage above all the satisfactions, which a joint consent with others in sin and pleasures can afford.

II. How may reproof be duly received ?

There is, the qualifications of the reprover, the nature of the reproof, and the matter of it.

1. The qualifications of the reprover. He must be a righteous man, and also a man of good report. Such a one will have a right principle and end in reproving, without which, it will not be duly received by the reproofed.

2. The nature of the reproof, which is threefold.

1. Ministerial—not those reproofs which come in the dispensation of the word, but occasional application of it to individuals. This is for his healing and recovery. Ministers are required to rebuke, exhort, admonish, and reprove, as occasion require.

2. Parental. This is a principal duty of parents, without which, they do but pamper them to slaughter and ruin. This duty is even taught by nature, and enjoined under severe threatenings and penalties.

3. Despotical, namely that of governors, rulers, and masters of families. This commands a particular obligation on them that are reproofed. If the reproofed be not guilty, there are in that case four things to be considered :—1. The reprover may be mistaken.—2. He may be credulous in taking up a report.—3. It may be a groundless surmise of his own.—4. It may arise from real godly jealousy. Without a due consideration of these things we shall never know how to take reproof aright.

III. How may reproofs be improved.

1. By searching out our own hearts and ways.
2. By considering impartially whether we are guilty.
3. Reproofs may be looked upon as gracious warnings.

4. When the mind is calm, then he undertakes peaceably to defend his character.

5. If the matter of the reproof be true, then it must be considered whether it be private or public, or attended with scandal. 1. If private, consider whether it is known by the person before whom he is reproofed. It may have been done through ignorance, inadvertence, or compliance with the customs of the world; if so, the reproof will bring light and conviction with it, and will create thankfulness in the reproofed. 2. If it were known, but not supposed to be observed by others, such should be very sensible of the kindness of God, in driving him from that retreat, where sin had placed its chief reserve. 3. If public, so as to be matter of scandal, then the reproof ought to be public, particularly in justice to the cause of God.

IV. Why should reproofs be well received?

1. Because they are intended to cure an evil, and to prevent danger in future.

2. This is an institution intended to remedy an evil, both under the law and gospel.

3. The great benefit and advantage of it ought to give it a ready admittance.

Use, by way of direction.

1. If there be no evidence to the contrary, it is our duty to judge that every reproof is given in the way of

duty. This will take off the offence with respect to the reprover.

2. Take heed of cherishing such disorders of mind as are contrary to this duty, and will frustrate its design, as hastiness of spirit, haughtiness of mind, prejudice, and depraved affections.

3. Reckon that a miscarriage for which a man is reprov'd, if not received and duly improved, is not only aggravated, but accumulated with a new crime, and marked with a dangerous token, an incurable evil, Prov. xxix. 1.

4. Let us keep ourselves in awe of the reproofs of God's word, and compare ourselves thereby. This is our standard and directory.

SERMON LVII.

ON WOMEN'S PROPHECYING UNCOVERED.

1 COR. xi. 10.

For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.

I. **W**HAT is meant by prophesying?

1. Prophesying means, being inspired to praise God in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, or in any other way. We are told in 1 Sam. x. 5, of the *prophets coming down the hill and prophesying, with psaltry, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp.*

2. Prophesying was taken for revealing secret things, either future or present—the secrets of men's hearts, or dark places in the scripture, or future events.

3. In the New Testament it is taken for publicly preaching the word of Christ; for instructing and teaching others.

II. What by being covered, and having power on her head ?

1. It was the custom of heathen prophetesses, when either sacrificing or delivering oracles, to have their heads uncovered and their hair dishevelled, viz. loose about their shoulders, to which there seemed some allusion in these Corinthian women. But christian women were not to follow them.

III. What by the angels ?

1. *Because of the angels*, which look into the church, and are witnesses of our behaviour there,

2. Or else, the angels of the churches, or bishops, who preside in the church, and whom they ought to respect and reverence.

3. Women's great ornament is *modesty*, and the apostle was so concerned for their honour and dignity, that he calls their attention to the presence of angels, as an inducement to preserve their character unsullied.

SERMON LVIII.

THE NATURE OF TEMPTATION.

JAMES i. 13.

Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God : for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

1. **N**EXT to the belief of a God, and his providence, is the belief of those two principles : 1. That God is not the author of sin.—2. That every man's sin lies at his own door.

2. As nothing is more contrary to the holiness of God, than to tempt men to sin ; so nothing can be

more against justice and goodness than first to draw men into a fault, and then to chastise them for it.

3. Every man's fault lies at his own door; hence, when men have done amiss, they are conscious to themselves it was their own fault, and they might have done otherwise. Guilt makes men liable to punishment, therefore a fear of punishment is the great restraint from sin.

I. Prove that God tempts no man to sin. This we may do by considering what temptation is, and the several sorts and kinds of it.

1. In scripture, temptation is commonly confined to the trial of a man's good and bad inclinations. Temptation always implies something of danger the worst way; and men are thus tempted, either from themselves, or by others.

1. By direct and downright persuasions to sin.

2. By being brought into such circumstances, as will greatly endanger their falling into it. This is,

1. Where men are beset with the allurements of the world.

2. Or regulated with its evils and calamities.

Riches, honours, and pleasures, are incentives to lust. The greatest bait is sensual pleasures; These inflame poverty and want, pain and suffering, these are great straights and are apt to tempt men to impatience and discontent, yea to be unjust and dishonest, and sometimes to apostatize from God.

II. How far has God a hand in these temptations?

That the providence of God does order and permit men to be brought into such circumstances, no man can doubt, all the difficulty is, how far the apostle exempts God for having a hand in these temptations?

Reasons for temptation.

1. Either for the trial and improvement of men's virtues: or,

2. By way of punishment for some former sins: or,

3. With a design to seduce men to sin, or else,

4. For the exercise and improvement of men's graces. This is indeed the chief end which God aims at, in

bringing good men, or permitting them to be brought into dangerous temptations.

5. By proportioning the temptation to their strength, ordering things so, by his wise providence, that they shall not be assaulted by any temptation, which is beyond their strength to resist and overcome.

6. God permits others to be tempted by way of judgment and punishment for some former great sins and provocations which they have been guilty of: notorious offenders, often fall into most sore temptations.

7. The last end of temptation is to try men, with a direct purpose and attention to seduce them to sin. Thus wicked men tempt others, and thus the devil tempts men. Thus he tempted Adam, Job, Christ, and many other good men.

Lastly, Satan lays all sorts of baits, as far as God will permit him, and his power reaches: Thus he suits his temptations as near as possible to the humours and appetites and inclinations of men.

IV. Reasons against this suggestion:—*God cannot be tempted.*

1. His nature is contrary to it, as well as out of the reach of it, consequently, he has no inclination to it whatsoever. Temptation is either by inclination, outward object, or external motive. The pure, and holy nature of God is at the utmost distance from all evil, to every thing of the kind he hath an irreconcilable antipathy.

2. Sin in its very nature is imperfection, and irregularity, a crookedness and deformity, so that, unless there be an inclination to it, there is nothing in it to move any one's liking.

3. There are no external motives can tempt God. Temptations are founded either in hope or fear, the hope of gaining, or the fear of losing, but the divine nature being perfectly happy, there is nothing either to hope or to fear.

IV. The consequence, *he cannot tempt any man.*

1. How can he draw men to that which he abhors, and which is so contrary to his own nature. Nor, the devil tempts either out of malice against God, or en-

vy to men ; but men tempt one another to make them like themselves, hereby to give countenance to their bad actions : none tempt others, but such as are bad themselves.

V. How is man tempted ?—*Of his own lust and enticed.*

The apostle doth not only acquit God, but he doth not ascribe the efficacy of temptation, even to the devil.

1. Man is tempted when he plays with the baits that are laid in his way, and yields to them : though Satan may tempt, yet men's lusts are the cause why they are caught by them.

2. The devil may excite, and stir men up to comply with temptations, and to yield to them : This the devil does, both by himself and others.

3. The devil cannot force men to sin, but it is our own lusts closing in with his temptations, that produces sin. The lusts of men are in general voluntary, but God hath put it in our own power to resist these temptations, and overcome them.

VI. Caution.

1. Let us beware of all such doctrines as do any way make God the author of sin ; either by laying men under a necessity to sin, or by laying sure designs to tempt and subdue men to sin : bringing them under the power of it.

2. Let us tempt no man to sin : all piety is reckoned to be an imitation of God ; therefore let us endeavour to be like him in this.

3. Since God tempts no man to sin, let us be like minded. There is frequent mention in Scripture of men's tempting God : viz. trying him whether he will do any thing for their sakes, that is, unbecoming his goodness, wisdom and faithfulness, or any other of his perfections.

4. Men are said to tempt God whenever they expect the protection of his providence in an unwarrantable way.

5. If we be negligent in our callings, and do not provide for our families ; or if we lavish away that which we should lay up for them, and then depend

upon the providence of God to supply them, we tempt him to that which is unworthy of him, which is to give his approbation to our folly, sloth, and carelessness.

Use.

1. Let us not excuse ourselves by blaming the devil.
2. Pray to God, that we may not be led into temptation.
3. Let us disarm temptations by mortifying our lusts.
4. So far as we are mortified, we are out of the power of temptation.

SERMON LIX.

ON GIVING ALMS.

MATT. X. 42.

Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these my little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

I. **W**HAT may we understand by giving alms ?

1. It is a hard thing to persuade men to give money ; it is almost the plucking out the right eye, and like cutting off the right hand. It is a pity, that it should be so, when the promises of God warrant them not to lose their reward.

2. Many rich persons think it beneath them to relieve the poor ; as a precedent, look in the 16th chapter of Luke. The rich man would not relieve poor Lazarus : and this poor man died for want, and even so did the rich man, for all his wealth : *and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments !* Beholding Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, while he was tormented

in those flames. This example should admonish all rich hard-hearted persons, to be molified with the cries and tears of the poor. *If thou break thy bread to the poor, thy light shall rise in darkness.*

3. We are told by Christ, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* The excellency of most things is shewed in giving. The sun, moon, and stars, give their light; the clouds their water, the trees their fruit, the earth her herbs, the herbs their flowers, the flowers their seeds, and the seeds their increase: yea, beasts, birds, fowls, and fishes, give their kind, and are more loving than we.

II. What is to be given, and to whom?

1. If it be a cup of cold water; or a piece of bread; this containeth matter, both for the taker and receiver. *If thy enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and water to drink.* Prov. xxv. 21.

2. As touching how much, we are taught to *give according to our ability*; if we have much, give liberally, if but little, *give of that little*, what we can spare.

3. Some say, they know not the objects; to give to such as we know to be bad, and put to a bad use is wrong: but otherwise, we are not only commanded to relieve our own country and brethren, but also strangers, and such as dwell in foreign lands.

4. Under the idea of bread, is meant all things necessary, and all manner of drink under the title of water. But in this as in other things, the simplicity of the old world is gone.

5. The tears of men, women, and children, are grievous and pitiful; and tears give cause of great compassion, especially of such as are obliged to beg their bread.

6. To a hungry body every bitter thing is sweet, and every foul thing seems clean. Hunger made the apostles glad to eat the ears of corn: David glad to eat the shew-bread: Lazarus to eat crumbs from the rich man's table: Elias content with meal: In Jerusalem, it made mother's eat their own children, it made the people cry to Pharaoh for bread: yea, and it made all asses heads, and the dung of pigeons to be

eaten in Samaria ; and others to swoon and lie dead in the streets. Hunger caused these bitter tears, and brought all these things to pass.

7. David said, that *God numbered all his tears in a bottle*. They were worthy of being preserved. Tears for a famine are sure to be gathered into God's bottle, and thence they rain as waters out of vials, in the way of revenge of those that take no compassion of such a woeiful spectacle.

8. Tears are the last thing that man, woman, or child can mourn by, and where tears move not, nothing will ; therefore, I exhort you by the tears of the distressed, to relieve those whom you see with misery oppressed.

III. Why should we give to the poor ?

1. Because he who thus giveth *lendeth unto the Lord ; and look what he layeth out, and it shall be paid him again*.

2. Blessed is he that *considereth the poor, the Lord shall deliver him in the day of trouble*. Then may we expect to receive our alms back again.

3. Let us not doubt God's promises, but fear his judgments—for always they have been found true and faithful.

4. Let us consider that we must all die, and leave our goods behind us, we know not to whom. Therefore let us distribute while here, that we may receive our reward in the kingdom of God.

5. All we receive, is only lent us of the Lord, therefore we have no right to dispose of it at our own pleasure.

6. St. Augustin said, the rich are moved by the poverty of others ; therefore we ought not to think it optional, but our duty to consider and relieve the poor.

IV. Application.

1. If the rich think it their duty to relieve the poor, they must give freely, because God will increase their store.

2. If the proud would leave off their superfluity in meat, drink, and apparel, a great part would be saved, which might suffice for the poor.

3. Let the glutton seek only to suffice nature, they might the poor be fed with that which only serves to shorten their lives.

4. Let the whoremonger leave off his inordinate expences, and it would be good for his body, and better for his soul. His purse would be heavier, and he much better able to relieve the poor.

5. Let tradesmen live orderly, avoiding superfluity and gaming, and live as becomes real christians ; then would they both comfortably support their own families, and be able to relieve the poor also.

6. Let us follow Cornelius's example, of whom the Angel said thus : *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up before God*, Acts x.

7. Consider those hungry bellies, who would willingly feed on that which you wastefully consume.

8. Call to mind the example of the widow of Sarepta, who, though her provision and store were but little, when the Lord's prophet came to ask of her bread, answered, *I have nothing but a little flour in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse* : notwithstanding she willingly bestowed upon him, for which her barrel was again filled with flour, and her pot with oil. This was the Lord's doing, for fostering the poor prophet of the Lord;

SERMON LX.

ON CLOSET PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 6.

When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

1. **I**N this chapter Christ explains the offices and exercises of piety, which were principally alms, prayer, and fasting.

2. Two faults the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty of, in the duty of prayer—1. Hypocrisy, being wont to perform their devotions in public places, merely for vain glory, to be seen of men. 2. Vain repetitions; for though it is principally the fault of the heathens, yet the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty of it, as Christ censured them for their long prayers, as if to move God, or else to be seen of men, or else because they shall be heard for their much speaking.

3. But our God, who searches the heart, delights more in ardent affections, than in either extension of voice, multiplication of words, or excruciating affections of the outward man. We do not pray to inform God, but that our hearts may be suitably affected, and that we may be mercifully accepted. To prevent vain babbling, Christ presents us with a compendious platform of prayer, in that which is commonly called, *The Lord's Prayer*.

4. The text holds out the modification, circumstances, and manner of carrying on this great duty of closet prayer, which is a copious subject, and a precious duty.

I. What by closet prayer.

1. Some understand it *mystically*, as importing the inner recesses of the heart, viz. *to commune with our own heart and be still*.

2. The word is to be taken *literally*, and imports any secret place where a thing is laid up, particularly as a chest or cupboard, wherein some valuable treasure is usually reserved.

3. Here it is taken for a closet, or a withdrawing room, or a retiring place, where a person is not seen or heard, nor yet disturbed in his devotions by any noise or company.

II. Shut thy door.

This denotes further secrecy, viz. to make thyself to be less observed, shut up thyself in a room; let none come at thee, to disturb thee in conversing with thy God; yea, bar the door and make it fast, that none overhear thee in thy retired devotions. In closet prayer the voice, as well as the body, should be included. Some very ridiculously pray so loud in the closet as to be heard in the street.

III. The great object of prayer—*thy Father*.

1. Thy business is not with men but with God; therefore seek to enjoy and please him—and fetch not a compass by praying to saints or angels, but go straight to God alone through Christ, and view him as thy Father.

2. Fear not thou poor disciple, only come with filial affection, and the spirit of adoption, and thou art sure to speed. This relation imports affection, provision, condescension, and compassion.

IV. Arguments in favour of the duty.

1. *Thy Father which seeth in secret*. His eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, consequently sees you in one place as well as another. God and conscience are competent witnesses to your uprightness.

2. *He will reward thee openly*. Though men see you not, you shall be seen by him who searches the heart, and knoweth the mind of the spirit.

3. Thus set thyself in the presence of God, approve thine heart to him, lay open all before him, and tell him all thy grievances. Though none see thee, yet he takes notice of thy tears and groans; and in due time he will reward thee openly and visibly, seasonably and publicly.

4. Reward thee in the great congregation, in the sight even of thine enemies; or, at any rate, publicly at the great day. Thus thy labour is not in vain, thy work is with the Lord, and thy reward with thy God.

SERMON LXI.

ON SINGING THE PRAISES OF GOD.

EPHES. v. 19.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.

IN the foregoing verses, the apostle is checking carnal mirth and intemperance, which both tend to foolish speeches, fond gestures, and impure songs, or wanton sonnets.

1. The singers here introduced are christians; and it is certain that christians only can understand properly how to rejoice in God. Their hearts can set the tune, so that God can hear and be well pleased with the music.

2. The song itself—psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Psalms are chiefly on the subject of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving; on which subjects are most of David's Psalms. Hymns are chiefly on the subject of petition, expressing our desires, our wants, and our expectations from God. Spiritual songs, being a short description of some singular event or deliverance, as the song of Moses and the children of Israel, when they had got through the Red Sea; or, the song of Hannah on the birth of Samuel, 1 Sam. ii. Some say psalms belong to moral things; hymns to sacred things; and spiritual songs to natural things.

3. The manner of singing is with melody, viz. with

inward joy and triumph of soul. Sing with grace or with thankfulness. Thankfulness is the very *selah* of this duty; it puts an accent upon the music, and sweetness to the voice, and helps us to sing melodiously. This brings pleasure and profit to the hearers. In singing psalms, the gracious heart takes wings and mounts to God, to join with the celestial choir. It is grace alone which fits the heart for, and sweetens the heart in this duty.

4. The master of this choir is the heart. The heart must be purified by the Spirit, and replete with spiritual affection. There is no proper melody without the heart; singing takes its proper rise from the heart. The apostle said, he would sing with the Spirit. If we, in singing, only offer the calves of our lips, it will too much resemble a carnal and a Jewish service.

I. The great end of singing the praises of God.

1. Our singing must not serve our gain, our luxury, or our fancy, but our Christ, our Lord, and our Redeemer. In this duty it is the praises of God we must chiefly celebrate: Can we magnify the true God better than by singing his praises?

2. We must not merely make a noise, but music. Some mind the tune more than the words; more the manner than the matter; more the governing the voice, than the readiess of the mind:—this is offensive to God. In this business we must study more to act the christian than the musician. Many, in singing, are too much like the organ, whose pipes are only filled with wind. The apostle advises us to sing with the heart, viz. we must sing David's psalms with David's spirit.

II. Its divine authority.

1. From scripture precepts. David frequently calls upon himself, Psalm vii. 17. *I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness; and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.* Sometimes he calls upon others, 1 Chron. xvi. 9. *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.* Sometimes he summonses the whole earth, Psalm lxviii. 32. *Sing unto God ye kingdoms of the earth.*

Hezekiah propagated this service, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. Moreover, *Hezekiah the King, and the Princes, commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the word of David, and of Asaph, the seer : and they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.* Jehoshaphat appointed singers, 2 Chron. xx. 21. *And when he had consulted the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Again, in 2 Chron. v. 12, it is said, *Also the Levites were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthum, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets.*

2. From scripture arguments.

We always find singing of psalms joined with other moral duties, Psalm xcv. 1, 2. *O come, let us sing unto the Lord ; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.* Praying and singing have generally walked together in the same equipage.

3. From scripture patterns. Moses both pens the 19th psalm and sings a holy song. Nay, David composeth psalms, and Hezekiah, and the Levites, all join to sing the Lord's praises. Yea, Christ himself recommends the duty, and calls on his apostles to join the choir, Matt. xxvi. 30. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.*

4. From scripture prophecy.

Divines observe, that the 100th psalm, v. 1, 2, are prophetic—*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.* To which may be added, the prophecy recorded in Isa. lii. 8. *Thy watchmen shall lift up their voice ; with the voice together shall they sing : For they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.* These watchmen shall have

a jubilee, when they consider the great joy approaching for the redemption obtained by Jesus Christ.

III. The sweetness of this duty.

It is the soul's jubilee, our spiritual resurrection ; yea, the sweetest solace of the sanctified soul. There is not a greater resemblance of heaven upon earth, than a company of God's people singing together the praises of God ; then the soul rejoiceth in divine goodness, exults in divine excellencies, and meditates on divine promises ; and whatever we make the matter of our singing, it will much affect the heart.

1. Singing is the music of nature. The mountains sing, Jer. xlviii. 33, *and joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field.* The valleys sing, Psalm lxxv. 13. *The valleys also are covered with corn ; they shout for joy, they also sing.* The trees of the wood sing, 1 Chron. xvi. 33. *Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth.* Nay, the very air is the birds music room, where they chant their delightful musical notes.

2. Singing is the music of ordinances. Augustin says, " that when he came to Millain, and heard the people of God sing, he wept for joy." The Jews, after the feast of passover was celebrated, they sang the 111th Psalm, and the five following verses. Our Saviour and his apostles sang an Lymn immediately after the blessed supper, Matt. xxvi. 30.

3. Singing is the music of saints. 1. They have performed this in great numbers, Psalm cxlix. 2. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him : Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.* 2. In their greatest straights, Isa. xxvi. 19. *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.* 3. In their greatest flight, Hab. xlii. 10, 11. *Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the mountains.* 4. In their greatest deliverances ; and lastly, in their greatest plenties. In all these changes, singing the praises of God has been their stated duty and delight.

4. Singing is the music of Angels. Job tells us, the morning stars sang together, Job xxxviii. 7. They delivered their message at Christ's incarnation, by a kind

of lauditory anthem, or grand chorus. *Glory to God in the highest !* Nay, in heaven, there is the Angels joyous music—they there sing *hallelujahs to the Most High, and to the Lamb, who sits upon the throne.* Rev. xv. 3.

5. Singing is the music of heaven. Hence the saints who were once tuning here their hymns, are now singing their hallelujahs in a louder strain, and articulating their joys, which here they could not express to their perfect satisfaction. Here below, they too often laboured with drowsy hearts, cold affections, and faltering tongues ; but in glory, all these impediments will be done away.

III. The universal practice of this duty.

1. It was practised by Christ and his apostles.

2. Godly princes have glorified God in this duty. Their thrones have not raised them above this spiritual service, 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

3. Worthy governors. Nehemiah takes care, that as soon as the wall of Jerusalem was set up, singers should be appointed to perform this part of God's service.

4. Holy prophets. As David penned prophetic, so he sung musical Psalms, cxlvi. 2. *While I live I will praise the Lord ; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.* This duty lay by David on his death-bed, and, Moses like, Deut. xxxii. he closed up his life with a saint-like song, 2 Sam. xxii. a little before his death.

5. As singing God's praises was not too low for kings and princes, so it is not too choice, or high, for subjects. The whole multitude sometimes engaged in chorus, Numb. xxi. 17. *Then Israel sang this song, spring up, O well, sing ye unto it.*

6. Eminent fathers. St. Basil calls the singing of psalms, spiritual incense. St. Augustin highly commends this duty ; and so did the generality of the ancient fathers.

7. Primitive christians. Tertullian relates of the practice of those times he lived in—" When we come to a feast, we do not sit down before there is prayer, and after the meal is past, one cometh forth, and

either out of the Holy Scriptures, or else from some other composer, begins a spiritual song.

When and by whom performed ?

1. In all ages. Moses the first penman of scripture ; he both sang a song, and penned a psalm.

2. In all places. Moses praised God in the wilderness, *Exod. xv.* David in the tabernacle, *Psalm xlvii. 6.* Solomon in the temple, *1 Kings, x. 12.* Jehoshaphat in the camp, *2 Chron. xx. 21.* Christ and his apostles in a particular chamber, *Matt. xxvi. 30.* And Paul and Silas at midnight in a prison, *Acts xix. 25.*

3. In all conditions. In a time of cheerful inward joy ; holy singing is the best exertion of inward rejoicing. Joy may excite, but must not stifle this duty.

5. By all sexes. Miriam sings a song to God, *Exod. xv. 21,* as well as Moses. Holy singing is proper both for males and females. Though women may not speak, or preach, yet they may sing in the church. Though women, by an apostolical command, are removed from the desk or the pulpit, yet they are not debarred from the choir, to join in that harmony where God's praises are celebrated.

IV. The honour God puts upon this duty.

1. God hath honoured this duty with glorious appearances, *2 Chron. v. 13.* *And it came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lift up their voice with trumpets and cymbals, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. Then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.*

2. With eminent victories. This we find upon record, *Chron. xx. 21, 22.* *And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, that they should praise the beauty of his holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which came against Israel, and they were smitten. Israel's success, follows Israel's singing.*

3. With evident miracles. This we find upon re-

cord, Acts xvi. 25, 26. *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.* Behold here an eminent miracle! Prisons saluting the prisoners' liberty. Paul and Silas's singing set God a working. Singing, like prayer, can work wonders.

V. How may we make melody in our hearts?

1. We must sing with understanding: not merely to be guided by the tune only, but also by the words. We must consider what we sing as well as how we sing.

2. We must sing with affection. *Love is the fulfilling of the law.* It is love as well as skill, which makes the music as well as the service most pleasing.

3. We must sing with grace. It is grace as well as nature, which sweetens the voice in singing. Grace is the root of all true devotion; not only grace habitual, but grace excited. The musical instrument delights not, but when it is played upon.

4. We must sing with spiritual joy. Singing is but the triumphant gladness of a gracious heart. We must sing as David danced before the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 15. *With shouting and rejoicing in God.*

5. We must sing with faith. This renders every service acceptable to God. If we hear the word, we must *mix it with faith.* If we pray, *it must be the prayer of faith*—so faith must also carry on this ordinance of singing. We must believe that the saints here are only tuning their instruments; in heaven there will be such pleasant sounds, as no ear ever heard, 1 Cor. ii. 9.

6. We must sing in the Spirit. As we must pray, so must we sing in the Spirit. The Spirit must breathe, as well as grace act, or else it will only be like the tinkling of a cymbal. This wind, as the Spirit is called, John iii. 8, must fill our organ, before we can make any music.

7. In singing we must help our hearts. Thy who neglect their hearts, may please men with their voices;

but they will displease God by the impurity of their affections. An holy heart and life will make them that sing to chant melodiously. First purify, and thou wilt more readily tune thy heart.

8. Prayer prepares for singing, as well as other ordinances. We must screw up every peg of affection, and strain every nerve and string of meditation in this ordinance. *The preparations of the heart in man are from the Lord: viz. our singing must needs be melody to the Lord, if it be assisted by the Lord.*

Observe. Those who despise this duty, do not consider the holy ends of it. As,

1. Psalms are for instruction. We instruct one another in this service; this duty is for spiritual and mutual edification. We edify our brother by singing as well as by speaking, Col. iii. 16.

2. Psalms are sung for admonition. *Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.* We may reprove a sin in singing a psalm, as well as in quoting a text.

3. Psalms are sung for praise and thanksgiving. Then as the Psalmist speaks, *we awake our glory.* Singing of psalms is only the echo of praise, the rebound of our joyous heart in a laudatory speech.

VI. The effects of this duty.

1. Singing can sweeten a prison. This truly divine service can turn a prison into a paradise; a place of restraint into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

2. Singing can prepare us for suffering. When Christ was ready to be offered up, he sang a hymn with his disciples. Christ sups and sings, then dies. Joy in the Lord arms against suffering, viz. Singing raises the heart above the discouragement of suffering.

3. Singing lightens and exhilarates the soul. It both reveals and amplifies our joy; and from thence let us draw our cheerfulness and delight.

Lastly, A check to those who scruple this ordinance.

1. How can a serious person sing in a mixed congregation? Answer, Are there not mixtures when we pray, and hear, as well as sing? This scruple may as well be levelled against these as against singing. If

we become thus curious, may we not expect but few to join us in our approaches to God.

2. Singing may be sanctified for conviction of sinners. Moses penned a song, and God commands the people to sing it, Deut. xxxi. 29. This was to convince the Israelites of their obstinacy and apostacy.

3. If we are thus scrupulous, with whom shall we join? Our Saviour had but twelve apostles, and there was a Judas among them. It was but a pharisaical boast to say, I am not as this publican, Luke xviii. 11.

4. If singing be a duty, thou art bound to perform it in the best manner thou canst; and others presence will not lessen thy comforts, nor invalidate thy service. Thou shalt have peace in thy own soul.

5. Heathenish spectators did eclipse the glory of the masters. It is observed by a wise and learned man, "That all these objections arise from the nature, use, and ends of this blessed employment."

SERMON LXII.

ON SAYING AMEN.

1 COR. xiv. 16.

Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

IT is particular to man to be capable of worshipping and adoring the God that made him, the providence that supplies him, and the grace that saves him.

2. In this chapter the Corinthians are censured for the abuse of their spiritual gifts. Some had the gift of

tongues, others that of prophecies, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

3. But their fault was, speaking in an unknown tongue, by which the people could not tell when to say *Amen*.

I. Prayer is a part of public worship.

1. Public prayer is an acknowledgment of God, of his being, his attributes, and providence—a testimony of our dependance, gratitude, and the like duties—and also expressions of our faith, resignation, trust, obedience, and in general of the homage which, as creatures, we owe to the Creator, Gen. iv. 26. *Then began men to call on the Lord.*

2. The very light of nature will teach us to own God in this manner. Besides, there was a sort of prayer included in the sacrificing, and always joined with it. The temple was built for it, 1 Kings, viii. 33. Zach. viii. 21. *The inhabitants of one city shall go to another city, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek before the Lord of Hosts.*

II. Explain the Amen required in public prayer.

1. The learned tell us, that *Amen* is an Hebrew word, and signifies the truth and certainty of a thing. It is used as a noun, and thus Christ is called the Amen, Rev. iii. 14. *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.*

2. It is sometimes used to denote the accomplishment of a thing, as when it is said, 2 Cor. i. 20. *The promises of God are yea and Amen.* They are faithful, and sure not to fail.

3. The word Amen is frequently used as a note of asseveration, as by our Saviour in the New Testament, where he often introduces and confirms what he saith, by the word *Verily, I say unto you.* In the original it is *Amen*.

4. But it is more frequently used at the conclusion of a prayer, and signifies a person's joining therein. It was used in the Jewish church for this purpose, as well as in denouncing the curses from Mount Ebal, Deut. xxvii. 15. *Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image; and all the people shall say,*

Amen. So when Ezra blessed the Lord, all the people answered *Amen*, *Amen*, Neh. viii. 5. It is not sufficient to pronounce *Amen* when the minister has finished his prayer, for that might be done whether a person understood the prayer or not.

5. A celebrated writer observes, "This Hebrew word, when prefixed to an assertion, signifies assuredly, certainly, or emphatically, so it is; but when it concludes a prayer, so be it, or so let it be, is its manifest meaning. In the former case it is asseverative, or assures us of the truth or fact, being an asseveration, and is properly translated *Verily*. John iii. 3.

In the latter case it is petitionary, and, as it were, epitomizes all the requests with which it stands connected. Numb. v. 22. Rev. xxii. 20. This emphatical term was not used among the Hebrews by detached individuals only, but, on certain occasions, by assemblies at large. Deut. xxvii. 14—26.

It was adopted also in the public worship of the primitive churches, as in the text, and was continued among the christians in following times; yea, such was the extreme into which many run, that St. Jerome informs us, in his time, that, at the conclusion of every public prayer, the united *Amen* of the people sounded like the fall of waters."

III. On saying *Amen*.

This supposes that you understand the meaning of what is said; and in order to this two things are necessary.

1. That they who are the mouth of the congregation, use a requisite plainness of speech, and do not affect strains of oratory, or stile, that is above the reach of common worshippers.

2. They should acquaint themselves with the main principles and doctrines of the christian religion, and such things as are more ordinarily the matter of public prayer; in which, if you are ignorant, the minister will be to you a barbarian.

3. Again, saying *Amen*, includes an assent to the several parts of the prayer, to which it is annexed. When the minister finishes his petition, the people witness their approbation by their *Amen*. St. Austin

calls the people's Amen, their subscription, or their approbation. This is so necessary, that without it there can be no joint prayer.

4. There is included in saying Amen, a joining in, or consent to the addresses solemnly offered up, and that your desires answer to the purport and scope thereof. The learned call it *fiat*—so let it be; wishing that the things so ratified and sealed may come to pass.

5. Your saying Amen, implies that you make the prayer your own, offering up to God the same confessions, petitions, and thanksgiving that are offered up by the minister, and with the same affections and acts of the mind.

6. Unless you understand this Amen, and say it thus, it is certain you do not know what it is to join in prayer. You may hear others, and repeat those words, but you do not indeed pray yourselves. You may be present in the congregation as spectators, but not as parties concerned. But while this is your case, you experience nothing of those pleasures of religious worship which true believers taste.

III. Prove that it is the duty of all who attend public worship to set their Amen to it.

1. Without this you do not pray at all. You are to attend to, and to understand what is said. To assent, consent, and go along with every petition, acknowledgment, thanksgiving, and make it your own. No prayers ought to be used in the church that would exclude the congregation from saying *Amen*.

2. Our Lord's model of prayer is a second proof, as he concludes that with an *Amen*. Matt. vi. 13. After the several petitions and doxology, *for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory*, he adds, *Amen*: thereby instructing us to seal the same with an *Amen*.

IV. Inquire how this duty may be performed?

1. With understanding. *How shall we say Amen at thy giving of thanks*, says the apostle in the text, *seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest*. We should fully comprehend the meaning of the prayer; without this there can be no proper assent. When the minister prays for pardon, justification, or sanctifica-

tion ; all such who have not some knowledge of these doctrines, cannot possibly say Amen to the prayer. Therefore, as you are to say Amen with understanding, get acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel.

2. You must say Amen with a closeness of attention—an attention which is steady, fixed, and kept up through the whole duty, so as to say Amen to every part of it. Thus let us keep up our attention, that we may join with them in our hearts.

Above all things keep from wandering thoughts, as it will be impossible to say Amen to any advantage in this inattentive frame. Prayer is like singing, if we do not so attend as to join in it, we shall but reap very little benefit from the service.

3. You are to say Amen with affection. Hence a bare assent of the mind is not sufficient. There must be those affections and holy passions, that constitute what we call devotion, Psalm cxix. 10. *With my whole heart have I sought thee.* Yea, our Amen must carry along with it inward affections ; hence, your affection, as well as attention, should be kept vigorous through the whole duty. *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Luke xviii. 1—7.

4. Let this Amen run through the whole duty, either secretly or publicly ; as, after any acknowledgment, supplication, thanksgiving, or petition, *Amen*, say you, so let it be. O grant this mercy for thy name's sake. The doubling the word, denotes their earnestness and warmth. Thus when Ezra prayed, and blessed God, it is said, all the people answered Amen, Amen. Thus should we set our Amen to the close of it with our whole heart.

V. Reflections.

1. If all who attend religious worship, ought to join in saying Amen, what shall we think of the church of Rome, which has appointed the priests to pray in Latin—certainly it must be an act of presumption.

2. If this be a duty, how blameable are those that make but little account of this part of the duty ; only just coming to hear the sermon, or retiring as soon as the sermon is ended.

3. If saying Amen is a matter of importance, it requires special qualifications; as, light in the understanding, grace in the heart: sincerity, attention; yea, holy and devout affections.

4. Prepare yourselves for the duty, and reject all vain thoughts. Every petition should run through the whole heart.

SERMON LXIII.

ON RESTITUTION.

LUKE xix. 8.

Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.

I. **O**N making restitution.

1. It is making satisfaction to another, wherein we have injured him by word or deed.

2. To restore him to his good condition, from which we have removed him.

How may this be done? Many ways.

1. As when he is punished beyond the law.

2. By fraud, cunning, violence, or oppression, as over-reaching by wit, or over-bearing him by power, in body, estate, or good name.

3. By maiming another in limb, or health.

4. By hindering of benefits due to him.

5. Skill in business, as having done well.

6. Over-reaching in any contract, as by taking advantage of his ignorance or necessity, to take away his right.

7. Hurting his character by slander, calumny, or false witness, or to render him ridiculous.

8. Although in some cases men be not liable to

make restitution by human laws, yet conscience is, or ought to be, binding.

II. How must it be done?

1. Do it *voluntarily*, viz. of thine own accord, although the person injured may not know it.

2. Do it in kind, if capable, and especially if the party demand it: if not, restore it in value—something as good.

3. If we have drawn any to sin, we are to acknowledge it, and to strive to recover him.

4. If we have injured his name, repair his character, and strive to do him honour.

III. The measure of restitution.

1. If possible, in kind; if not, in value.

2. Restore the thing with its natural increase for the time.

3. If not, yet we are to give all reasonable satisfaction; not the highest or lowest, but the middle estimation.

4. Give what the law would, viz. in most cases rather favourable than rigorous.

5. The injury which follows should be taken into the account.

6. Since those who are in trade can hardly remember all the particulars, over and above give something to the poor.

IV. Persons to make restitution.

1. They who have done the injury, or else they who stand in their stead.

2. If done by accomplices, the whole are accountable for the wrong.

3. If all will not, the rest are bound to make it good for the whole.

4. If the injury devolve on an estate, that estate alone is liable to make it good.

V. To whom must it be made?

1. If the person be known and alive, the satisfaction is to be made to him alone.

2. If not, his nearest relations, viz. where it is likely the deceased would have bestowed it.

3. If dead, or not known, then it should be given to the poor, or to some other charitable use.

4. If it be a community, return it by some public good work, which may be of common benefit and advantage to the public.

Use.

1. If you have escaped this sin, be very thankful.
2. If you have not, do not deceive your own soul.
3. Be speedy in rectifying any mistake of this sort.

SERMON LXIV.

ON EVIL SPEAKING.

TITUS iii. 2.

Speak evil of no man.

1. **G**ENERAL persuasions to repentance and a good life, are of use to recommend religion; but these discourses do not always reform men's lives, because they fall among the crowd. But when we treat of particular duties and sins, to practise the one and forsake the other, it will sometimes answer the purpose.

2. But fully to reform, we must represent their faults so as to convince them of their evil tendency to work a cure: one of these common vices is *calumny* and *evil speaking*, which both creates much guilt, and occasions much trouble.

I. The nature of this vice of *evil speaking*.

1. This vice consists in saying things of others which tend to their disparagement, and hurt, or reproach, so as to take away or lessen their reputation and good name: it is called defame and slander. If what is said, be false, and we know it, then it is *calumny*: but if it be taken from the report of others,

it is then *slander*, and the more injurious if it be groundless.

2. Again, It is *evil speaking*, whether we be the first authors of it or not ; because the man evil spoken of is equally defamed either way. To speak evil to a man's face, is to revile him ; but behind his back, it is called *slander* or *backbiting*.

3. Whether it be done directly, or obscurely by insinuation, it is downright reproach, or even with crafty commendation. The one may be more dextrous, but not less faulty.

4. The deepest wounds are given by art : as, *have you not heard so and so ? I say no more ; I only ask a question. Or, they are loath to say what they have heard of such a one, and very sorry for it.* And this is frequently done without telling the thing, but leaves you in the dark to suspect the worst.

II. The extent of it, with its limitations.

Not that we are absolutely forbid to say any thing concerning others that is bad ; this may be both necessary and our duty, and in some cases absolutely so.

In general, this is not to be done without necessity : as, the preventing some evil, or procuring some good to ourselves, or others, as in the following cases.

1. It may be both a laudable and commendable duty to tell a man privately of his faults ourselves, or else employ some other more proper person, if it be likely to improve and mend him. It is possible he may not be guilty, and then it gives him an opportunity to defend himself ; or if he be guilty, a private reproof may reform him : but let it be done in the spirit of meekness.

2. It is lawful, and our duty, when legally called to the bar, to bear witness concerning the fault and crime of another. Good men cannot accuse without some good end to be answered : without this, it being ill mannered and officious, if not worse.

3. It is lawful, and even our duty, to publish the faults of others in our own necessary defence and vindication. When a man cannot conceal another's faults without betraying his own innocence, charity itself

does not require a man to expose himself, to screen another. We are to love our neighbour as ourselves, but not above them.

4. It is lawful for caution to a third person, who is in danger of being injured by the company or ill example of another, or when in danger of putting too much confidence in another, not knowing their bad qualities; but let it spread no farther than the persons concerned.

III. The causes of evil speaking.

1. *Ill-nature* and *cruelty* of disposition. By some, ill-nature passes for wit or cunning. A proneness to this vice argues the heart in a bad state. To speak evil of others is now become too common an entertainment for all companies.

2. *Malice* and *révenge*. When persons are in a passion, they do not consider what is true, but what is spiteful and mischievous; and hence they usually speak evil in revenge for some injury which they have received from them; nay, some are so devilish, as to invent false reports on purpose to blast another's reputation.

3. Another cause of evil speaking, is *envy*. Men look with an evil eye on the good they see in others, and therefore cast a cloud on their characters. This makes them greedily entertain, and industriously publish any thing that may serve their purpose, thereby to raise themselves on the ruins of another's reputation.

4. Again, *impertinence* and *curiosity*. Having an itch for talking and meddling with others' affairs that does not concern them. Some love to mingle in all business, and seem loath to appear ignorant of so important a piece of news as the faults of others, therefore eagerly pick up every thing unfavourable in every company.

5. Some do this out of *wantonness* and *diversion*; so little do some men think how dear every man's reputation is to himself. It is next to a man's life to sport with his character. Solomon compares them to *mad-men*, who casteth about *firebrands*, *arrows*, and *deaths*.

IV. The bad consequences of this practice.

1. If what is said be not true, it is an *injury* beyond all imagination, and beyond all possible repara-

tion. Should we endeavour to vindicate his character afterwards, it makes but little amends, as it will seldom reach as far as the reproach.

2. It is a very high *provocation*, and may end in dangerous and desperate *quarrels*; and one reason why we should not speak evil is, it will almost be sure to come out, and he may take the first opportunity to be revenged.

3. This vice is bad to ourselves, for whoever is wont to speak evil of others, gives a bad character of himself, even to those whom he may desire to please, who, if they be wise enough, will soon conclude that he speaks of them to others, as he does of others to them; and but for blind partiality, every one would soon see it.

4. There is scarcely any thing men use more strict justice and equality in, than in rendering evil for evil. A reproachful slanderous speech has cost many a man a *duel*, and perhaps his *life*. Besides, our own safety, and quiet should teach us to avoid *evil speaking*.

V. Arguments against *evil speaking*.

1. The use of speech is given for a noble purpose, that we may communicate our thoughts more easily, and consult together for mutual good.

2. How cheap a kindness it is to speak well; at least not evil—a good word is an easy obligation. Were a good man ever so covetous, he might afford a good word. Many have paid very dear for the contrary.

3. Nothing commends us more to others, than to be free from this vice; such persons' kindness is desirable, and encourages our confidence.

4. Consider how every man is apt to be affected with this usage; yea, let a man be as bad as possible, he is glad of any one's good word.

5. Consider when about to speak evil of others, if you are not guilty of the same; therefore give no occasion of this barbarous work to others. Few are so free from infirmities or faults, as not to become obnoxious to some person.

6. It may be as great a charity to conceal the evil you hear and know of others, as if you relieved them in a great necessity.

VI. Rules for preventing this evil.

1. Never say any evil of any man, but what you certainly know : if you accuse of any crime, though privately among friends, speak as upon your oath, because God sees and hears you.

2. Consider before you speak, whether he has not obliged you by some real kindness, and then it is a bad return to speak ill of him, who hath done you so much good.

3. Consider also, whether, in the course of human affairs, you may not sometime stand in need of his favour, and how incapable of it will this render you.

4. Let us accustom ourselves to pity the faults of men, and then we shall take no pleasure in publishing them.

5. Whenever we hear a man evil spoken of, if we know of any good of him, let us say that.

6. That you may not speak evil, do not delight to hear it ; give no countenance to busy-bodies, and those that love to talk of other persons' faults.

7. Let every man mind himself and his own duty.

8. Let us set a watch before our lips, and not speak but upon consideration.



SERMON LXV.

ON HEARING THE WORD.

HEB. iv. 2.

The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

1. **T**HE gospel is the greatest gift the world can receive.

2. It contains God's proposals of peace to guilty man.

3. It offers pardon of sin, deliverance from misery; yea, eternal life and glory.

4. It might as such be expected that it would be joyfully received; but, alas! experience proves the contrary—to many it only proves the savour of death unto death.

I. What is meant by the word?

1. The word and gospel are of the same import. The gospel signifies good news, or glad tidings. *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself; yea, and St. Paul beseeches us to be reconciled to God.*

2. The word carries in it not only promises of pardon, but of regeneration and holiness. Both the societies, entertainments, and exercises of the heavenly world, would not only be insipid, but a torment to impure souls.

3. The word carries in it these duties, which we owe to him as our Creator and Preserver. How untrue, that the gospel is all promises, but requires no duties, as repentance, faith, and mortification.

4. The word means the divine threatenings as well as promises, which are as numerous in the gospel as in the law. Hence the word *damnation* is but once used in the Old Testament, and thirteen or fourteen times in the New.

II. The advantages of the gospel when received in faith.

1. As it declares the council of God, so it makes wise to salvation all those who receive it by faith. Here it shews how guilty creatures may be pardoned, reconciled to him, and obtain eternal life.

2. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, because of their goodness and futurity, as the objects of hope; faith considers them as true and real, and gives them being and subsistence to the soul, when their effects produce love, joy, and obedience.

3. Faith in its actings on the promises, is said to receive it. Sometimes we are said to receive the word itself, and sometimes the subject-matter of it:—Thus we are said to receive Christ and the engrafted word. By engrafting there becomes a mixture of the natures;

of the stock, and the graft, into the one common principal of fruit-bearing.

4. The spiritual engrafting of the word, is the casting of the soul into the mould, type, and likeness of the doctrine of it. Hence it is said, *we have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.* So the word being mixed with faith, and engrafted into the soul, changes the natural operations of it, to the production of spiritual effects.

5. The word is frequently compared to food, yea, to strong meat and milk, suited to the respective ages and conditions of believers. Christ says, *I am that bread that cometh down from heaven. His flesh is meat, and his blood is drink indeed.*

III. How does unbelief render the word unprofitable?

1. Unbelief so hardens the heart, that neither the threatenings nor the promises of God make any impression upon it. We are cautioned against being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. *Hearing they hear not, and seeing they see not.*

2. Unbelief works by ignorance, to render the word unprofitable to them that hear it. Unbelief promotes ignorance, and both are managed by Satan to render the word unprofitable. Ignorance of God's attributes, nature and law, in its purity, extent, and spirituality; of the sinfulness of sin, the mystery of godliness, the union of the Godhead, and of the righteousness brought in by the merits and death of Christ.

3. Pride is another hindrance by which unbelief acts and renders the word unprofitable to many; this both infected Adam and all his posterity. It is visible in all until taken away by grace. High imaginations must be laid low and captivated, before they can be brought into a state of salvation. God will have all of grace—man wants it in a way of debt.

4. Unbelief works sometimes by pretended humility and self-denial. How many reject Christ, from a pretence that they are unworthy of him. Some say they dare not, yea, they think it presumption to attempt to believe in Christ for pardon and reconciliation, their sins are so great.

5. Unbelief raises a secret jealousy in the heart, that God is not in earnest when he offers his salvation. How many think that God is not willing to bestow Christ with his purchased blessings upon us, although he is daily entreating us to believe and accept of salvation.

6. Unbelief renders the word unprofitable to many who hear it, by inclining them to rest on their duties for justification before God. Although faith without works is dead, yet works without faith cannot save us. This world, this bad world, if allowed, sets aside the *gospel of grace*. Christ is the end of the law to all them that believe.

III. How does faith in the word save the soul ?

1. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, because of their goodness and futurity as the objects of hope. Being promised, faith gives them being and subsistence in the soul, and then their effects produce love, joy, and obedience. This spiritual mixture animates us to mortify sin, and to live to God in all holiness, both in heart and life.

2. Faith acting on the promise is also said to receive it. Sometimes we are said to receive the word itself, and at other times the things themselves which are the subject of it. As receiving the ingrafted word with meekness is to receive the promises, so we are said to receive Christ and the atonement.

3. The word becomes ingrafted, when we lay aside all filthiness, and corrupt irregular inclinations which by nature possesses the heart, and makes us at enmity with God. By faith in the word these are rooted up and cast out—it is called implanting or ingrafting. By ingrafting there becomes a mixture of natures.

4. The effect of this ingrafting of the word, is the casting into the mould, type, or likeness of the doctrine of it. “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” As the scion being ingrafted into the stock, turns and changes the natural juice of the stock into another kind of fructifying nourishment than it had before ; so the word, being mixed with faith, and ingrafted into the soul,

changes the natural operations of it, by which the soul receives a new impression from it like the wax from the seal.

5. The word being mixed with faith, is like eating and drinking, called milk and strong meat, suited to the respective ages and conditions of believers. Christ says, *I am the bread of life: My flesh is meat, and my blood is drink indeed.* Faith is the eating of this food, after which it is turned into the very substance of the constitution.

Use.

1. Thank God for his holy word.
2. Believe it with all your heart.
3. Reduce it to practice in your life.

SERMON LXVI.

ON THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

HEB. ix. 26.

But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

1. **T**HE Apostle presents us with a view of the value of our Lord's sacrifice, from its singularity. *Once in the end of the world hath he appeared, &c.*

2. The grand end of this sacrifice is to put away sin, viz. remove its guilt, its power, and its dominion—signifying to disannul, frustrate, or destroy.

3. The season when Christ put it away—*the end of the world.* It needs never to be repeated, *that once* is sufficient.

I. Why was this sacrifice necessary?

1. Because God, the supreme Lawgiver and Judge, for our rebellion, delivered us up to Satan, and to the

power of sin ; and Satan, as the jailor, led us captive at his will.

2. We could not be freed, but by a ransom. The purpose of heaven was, that sin should not go unpunished, because contempt had been poured on the divine perfections, and his honour had been trodden in the dust. Therefore, the glory and wisdom of the Lawgiver must be vindicated by some signal evidence against sin, evidently the justice and holiness of God, as well as the righteousness of his government. Hence there must either be a ransom to satisfy justice, and repair the dishonour done to the Creator, or all the human race must perish for ever.

3. In case a surety should stand up for guilty men, three things were incumbent on him, in order to constitute that character, and render him a perfect surety.

1. In our room and stead he paid a price of redemption for us, as if we had done it.

2. This price of redemption was to be paid to God.

3. It must answer the demands of law and justice. All these qualifications centered in the Lord Jesus.

II. Prove that this sacrifice put away sin.

1. He once appeared to put away sin ; and this appears from the perfection and dignity of his person. He was perfectly holy ; he knew no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth. He also had the Spirit without measure, and being God, all fulness dwelt in him bodily—hence he was called, *Iehovah our Righteousness*.

2. The sufficiency of Christ's atonement appears from this, that he has done every thing to satisfy divine justice. For this end he took upon him our nature, and suffered in our stead.

3. God the Father, as sustaining the rights of the Deity, approved and accepted the sacrifice ; this is evident both by a voice from heaven, and also by raising him from the dead.

4. The sufficiency is evident from the glorious effects of it ; as, the remission of sins, peace and intercourse with God ; our persons and services are accepted upon his account, adopted into God's family ; sanctification, joy, yea, and heaven itself, is purchased

by this sacrifice ; and as he purchased, so he prepares and preserves it for us, and us for it.

III. What there is in sin that Christ's sacrifice puts away.

1. It puts away the guilt of sin, or our obligation to eternal punishment. By virtue of his obedience and death, he has reversed the sentence of the law, which was death and damnation. Faith being imputed to believing sinners, they are no more exposed to the dreadful effects of a broken law.

2. He puts away the dominion of sin, to which we were slaves, and under its power and tyranny. Christ by his sacrifice hath wrought out deliverance ; by him the chains of sin are broken, the prison doors are opened, and captives set at liberty.

3. Our Lord by his sacrifice puts away the stain and pollution of sin. Man at first was fair as the moon, and clear as the sun ; but by breaking the covenant, he lost original righteousness. Sin then got the dominion, and, like a leprosy, diffused its fatal influences all over the frame. But in order to our complete happiness, the stain and pollution of sin is taken away by the offering of our Lord : hence we are said to be cleansed by his blood. 1 John, i. 7.

4. He puts away, or rather destroys the inherent power and inbeing of sin in the soul. Hence our old man is said to be crucified with him. By crucifixion the life and strength decayed, till at last it gives up the ghost.

5. He puts away the dreadful consequences of sin. To be under the curse of God, and exposed to his wrath, the power of which none knows ; but deliverance from that dreadful state is effected to all who believe by the sacrifice of Christ.

IV. How does Christ put away our sin ?

1. He puts away sin *meritoriously*, by substituting himself as the surety and mediation of a better testament ; he suffered that he might intercept that wrath, which should have broke on our heads.

2. He puts it away by his word and Spirit, shewing our wretched state and need of Christ, and righteousness to complete our happiness. He shews our im-

perfection and demerit, in order to bring us to see and feel our need of him.

3. He puts away sin, by an application of his merits, which our faith laying hold of, makes us partakers of his righteousness.

4. He destroys sin out of the heart, by manifesting his love and favour to the soul—the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are his children. These divine manifestations are the privilege of all real genuine christians.

5. At death all the effects of sin will for ever cease as to the soul; and as to the body, it will be raised again at the last day—hence departed saints are stiled *he spirits of just men made perfect*.

V. The necessity of Christ's putting away sin.

1. From the justice of God, which he can no more dispense with, than he can deny himself. This is clear, both from the word and conscience.

2. It is plain from the nature of God, because sin is a moral evil which strikes at God's perfections and being; and therefore deserves infinite punishment or satisfaction, which none could give but Christ.

3. From the sanction of the law; from which it appears necessary that the law should be fulfilled, either in the offenders, or in the person of the surety.

4. This appears necessary, absolutely so from the death of Christ, how could God deliver up his Son to such an ignominious death without an absolute necessity.

5. The necessity of it appears evident from the types under the law. The slain sacrifices typified Christ. They could not take away sin, therefore Christ must come to put it away.

6. The principal end of Christ's coming was, that all the divine perfections, might be glorified, and sinners recovered from misery.

Use.

See the dreadful nature of sin, the justice of God, and the great sacrifice of Christ.

SERMON LXVII.

ON DELIGHTING IN GOD'S LAW.

ROM. vii. 22.

For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.

I. **T**HE nature and advantages of the law of God.

1. The law contains the *truth* of divine *precepts*. The two Testaments are the two lips by which the God of truth hath spoken to us, about our sin, our misery, and the deserved wrath of God.

2. The law of God is holy, just, and good ; truth is adequate to the understanding, and goodness to the will.

3. To this law is added the gospel, without which it had been imperfect, and without which there had been no helps to perform its conditions. The goodness and excellency of this law appears as follows :

1. This blessed law of God is a letter sent to us from heaven, indited by the Holy Ghost, and sealed with Christ's blood. How delightful it is to read over this love-letter.

2. It is a light that shines in a dark place, 1 Peter, i. 19. It is our pole star to guide us to heaven—it was David's candle and lanthorn to walk by, Psalm cxix. 105.

3. It is a spiritual glass to examine ourselves by.—David often looked into it, and got much wisdom, Psalm cxix. 104. It both shews our spots, and directs how to have them taken away. It was both a glass to look in, and a laver to wash away our spots.

4. In this law is contained our evidences of heaven ; to know if we are heirs of, and have our names written in heaven, we must consult this book :—*We know we are passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.* Here is our evidence.

5. The law of God is a place of *ammunition*, from which we fetch our spiritual artillery to conquer Satan.

When Satan tempted Christ he used this armoury ; yea, three times Christ wounded the serpent with this sword. How good it is to have our armour when the enemy is in the field.

6. This law of God is our spiritual physic-book, viz. our book of receipts ; here there is a receipt for every disease. Are we dead and dull ? *Thy word hath quickened me*, Psalm cxix. 50. Are our hearts hard ? *Is not thy word as a fire*, Jer. xxiii. 29. Are we grown proud ? *God resisteth the proud*, 1 Peter, v. 5. Are we guilty ? *Sanctify them through thy truth*, John xvii. 17. The law of God is like a physic-garden, into which we may walk and gather any herb to expel the poison of sin.

7. The law of God is a divine *treasury* to enrich us ; here is knowledge and assurance to be found, Col. ii. 2. Here many truths are scattered, precious as diamonds, to *adorn the hidden man of the heart*. David made the law of God his heritage, and also his true pearl. Here we dig till we find heaven.

8. The law of God is our cordial in fainting times—it is a strong cordial, Heb. vi. 18. In affliction this can turn water into wine. Worldly comforts are but weak consolations, as they cannot bear up against trouble ; but the word affords strong consolations.

9. The law of God is *heavenly manna*, that suits itself to every christian palate ; if the soul desires to be quickened and strengthened, he may find all in this *manna*.

II. When do we delight in the law of God ?

1. When we are often *thinking upon it*. What a man delights in, his thoughts are often running upon. The covetous man is said to *mind earthly things*. The precious promises are the conduit which hold the water of life, like the two olive branches, Zech. iv. through which the two golden pipes do empty the golden oil. These seal up pardon, adoption, and glory, Isa. xxxviii. 16.

2. If we delight in religion, nothing will keep us from it ; we shall come to converse with God in his *word*, in *prayer*, and in *sacraments*. He that loves

gold will trade for it. The merchants will compass sea and land to proselyte money.

3. Those that delight in the law of God and religion, will often be speaking of it. *They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.* David so delighted in God's testimonies, that he would speak of them before kings, Psalm cxix. 46. The spouse in the Canticles could not conceal her love.

4. He that delights in God will give him the best in every service. Whom we love the best shall have the best. He that delights in God shall give him the strength of his affections, and the cream of his duties. If he had any thing better God should have it. Hypocrites care not what they put God off with. They offer what costs them nothing. Prayer without wrestling, they put God off with.

5. He that delights in God, doth not much delight in any thing else ; they use worldly good as a conveniency for their passage, or as a staff to walk with ; but when they get to their eternal rest, they will have no need of this Jacob's staff. The higher the affections the less need of it.

6. True delight is constant. Hypocrites may have pangs of sorrow, and flashes of joy, which are soon over. The Jews for a season rejoiced in John's light. What a weariness to serve God when there is no delight in him.

III. How may we delight in this law of God ?

1. Set an high *value* and *esteem* upon the word ; what the judgment prizeth, the affections embrace : He that values gold will delight in it. Slight thoughts of religion make the affections dull and languid. David prized God's statutes *more than much fine gold.*

2. Pray for a spiritual heart ; earthly affections cannot delight in spiritual mysteries. The earth puts out the fire. We must taste that the Lord is gracious. It is not enough to hear and read sermons and promises, but we must taste them, which will be the joy and rejoicing of our hearts, Jer. xv. 16.

3. To delight in the law of God, we must purge out the old leaven of sin ; because sin will poison this spiritual delight. To have God's law sweet, let not

wickedness be sweet in your mouth, Job xx. 12. When sin is your burden, Christ will be your delight.

Use.

1. Let christians labour for this, to let their delight be in the law of the Lord.

2. How thankful should those be who can find this spiritual delight in God and his law.

3. How David blessed God, that the people offered so cheerfully to the building of the temple ; thus willingness was more than their offering.

4. It is a great blessing to have this promptitude and alacrity in God's service. Delight animates the spirits in duty ; it is then only that we act to any purpose in religion.

5. Christians are never drawn so powerfully and sweetly, as when the chain of delight is fastened to their heart.

6. Without this delight, all our praying and hearing is like water spilt upon the ground ; it loseth both its beauty and its reward.

7. Then let believers bless God, who hath oiled the wheels of their souls with delight, so as to run without weariness.

8. For thy comfort, be assured, thou shalt not want any thing thy heart can desire, Psalm xxxvii. 4. *Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

SERMON LXVII.

ON INGRATITUDE.

1 CHRON. xxxii. 25.

But Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him ; for his heart was lifted up : therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

1. **A**MONG many other vices, there is none more base or more common than ingratitude. It is the sin of individuals, of families, of churches, of kingdoms, and even of all mankind.

2. The guilt of ingratitude lies heavy on the whole race of men, though few of them feel and lament it.

3. If the plague of ingratitude must cleave to us, let us at least lament it, bear witness against it, condemn ourselves for it, and do all that we can to suppress it in ourselves and others.

I. How was Hezekiah guilty of it ?

1. The memories of his life, which are illustrious for piety, zeal, reformation, victory over his enemies, glory and importance at home and abroad ; this, alas ! is recorded of him, *That he rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him ; for his heart was lifted up : therefore wrath was upon Judah and Jerusalem.*

2. Many had been the blessings of this good man's life, particularly in two instances. 1. The Assyrians had overcome his country, and the haughty king was grown insolent with success, and sent Hezekiah a blasphemous letter to intimidate him and his people. He profanely bullies, and defies Hezekiah and his God. But only observe the signal efficacy of prayer ! Hezekiah, Isaiah, and other pious people made prayer to God, who heard, and wrought a miraculous deliverance. He sends out an angel who destroyed in

one night 145,000 men, which is supposed to have been done by means of lightning.

3. Hezekiah was sick unto death, viz. in its own nature mortal : but upon his prayer, was recovered, and fifteen years added to his life : this also was great cause of gratitude. And while his deliverances were fresh in his mind, he was humble and thankful ; but in time, those grateful impressions wore off, and pride began to rise, thinking himself the favourite of heaven on account of his goodness.

4. This pride and ingratitude passed not without evidences of the divine indignation, as we are told *wrath from the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem*. As the crime was not upon him alone, so neither is the punishment inflicted on him alone.

II. Apply the subject to ourselves.

1. Are we not blessed with being fearfully and wonderfully made, complete in all parts, and not monstrous in any.

2. Are we not possessed of a rational soul, enjoying the blessing of sound reason, amidst so many things which have shattered it in others ; capable of enjoying the pleasures of religion.

3. We enjoy the blessings of a spacious world, prepared and furnished for our accommodation, enriched with the sun, moon and stars, and adorned with trees, vegetables of various sorts, and of every other thing for our use and convenience.

4. The blessings of an early education, of being born in a christian country, in this adult age, when all improvements of all sorts are carried to its height.

5. The blessings of a preached gospel, with all the rich means of grace ; yea, and in a peaceful country, where religious liberty is enjoyed to the full.

6. The great blessing of being created anew, and of the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity of mind, with a right to all the blessings of the gospel.

7. And lastly, of religious friends and acquaintances, with whom we can take sweet counsel together. Happy we, who enjoy such a rich profusion of blessings !

III. How may we cultivate gratitude and thankfulness?

1. Let us acknowledge God's goodness in temporals, and exercise thankfulness.

2. Let us look back on twenty, thirty, or forty years; and what a sense of deliverances rises upon us; in childhood, youth, riper years, or from fatal accidents.

3. How wonderfully have we escaped many disorders which have carried others into eternity.

Use 1. In these things, let the great God be acknowledged.

2. What a rich profusion of blessings have we received.

3. Do we stand convicted, shocked, and confounded?

4. How awful is it to deny the agency of divine Providence!

5. Have you ever called over your benefits?

6. How undeserving of any of these mercies?

7. Oh the overflowing, rich mercy of God!

SERMON LXIX.

ON THE BELIEVER'S SONSHIP.

1 JOHN, iii. 2.

Behold, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

I. **T**HE import of the glorious title, *the sons of God*.

1. He is a son who is begotten and born again; which is a universal change of a corrupt rebellious

sinner into an affectionate, penitent, obedient servant of God. His views and dispositions are greatly altered.

2. They are admitted to enjoy the privileges of children, which is implied in their title; viz. they have access to the Father, with the guardianship of angels: yea, and they are seasonably corrected by him for their good.

3. They have liberty and access to him by prayer; and he not only allows them to attend on him in his ordinances, but he frequently enlarges their hearts, so that they find themselves admitted into his presence chamber.

4. The privilege of being corrected by him as a Father is such, that they are too apt to count it a calamity rather than a blessing; but since it proceeds from benevolence, rather than vengeance, and is intended for their benefit, and not for their destruction; and since it is a promise rather than a threatening, as such many of the children of God have found reason to praise him for this wholesome severity. Psalm cxix. 67—71. James i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 6.

5. The children of God are heirs of an eternal inheritance, and their relation implies a title to it. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. How vast this inheritance is, you may learn from Rev. xxi. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. What glorious advancement from a prison to a throne, from the dunghill, to be princes among the people.

II. The ignorance of these sons of God as to their future state.

Saints have foretastes of heaven, and this convinces them of the reality of the state beyond the grave.

1. It doth not yet appear what we shall be with respect to the enlargement of the faculties of their souls: its faculties may expand to a very great extent.

2. It doth not yet appear what kind of glorious bodies we shall have after the resurrection. Though they will still be material bodies, yet we know matter is capable of prodigious refinements. How great the difference between earth, water, and our bodies; and yet they are originally the same. Thus our bodies

may be changed in a most amazing manner, and yet continue substantially the same. St. Paul tells us they will be spiritual bodies, viz. so exquisitely refined, that they will resemble proper spirits, and be like Christ's glorious body. Phil. iii. 21.

3. It does not yet appear what will be the employments and services of the heavenly world. Doubtless the praises of God, and contemplating his works, will be a great part of our employ : but a state of activity will be most proper for vigorous souls.

4. Whether separate spirits will be employed as angels, as fellow-guardians to their brethren, or ambassadors of their Sovereign, to the remote parts of the earth, we cannot say. Here curiosity would be glad to pry into futurity. There our exalted services will be made so exquisitely happy, as we can, but now have very faint ideas of.

5. Here we have many wants which are not satisfied ; but there all our vast capacity of happiness will be filled to the utmost. Shall the King's sons degrade their dignity, and depreciate their inheritance ? Nay.

III. In what respects the sons of God are unknown to the world.

1. The world may see a considerable difference between the children of God and others ; but this they look upon as odious singularity, rather than a peculiar excellency.

2. They may discover a great difference ; and could they read their hearts, it would be still more visible : but by how much the greater difference, so much the more they hate them.

3. Though they profess a veneration for religion, yet wherever it appears, they hate, oppose, and asperse it.

4. They say they love religion, but they say also that they hate hypocrisy, preciseness, &c. And whenever a person appears remarkably religious, they will be sure to brand him with some of their odious names. Thus real christians have always met with more contempt, than easy, pliable professors, or even the most abandoned sinners.

IV. Reflections.

1. What a state of darkness and imperfection is this! We have slipped into being we know not how, and ere long we shall be we know not what. Alas! how short our views, and how little we can see.

2. What surprising discoveries of things will flash upon us when we enter the other world! When the unveiled perfections of the Deity suddenly shine upon our eyes, how shall we be lost in wonders! What raptures of praise!

3. We are just on the brink of this surprising state; a few years, months, perhaps days, or even the next hour; they may flash upon us! What a strange world! Then we shall have done with all the trifling things of this state of things: all will vanish like a vapour: all before us will be important, majestic realities!

4. How astonishing it is, that we should think so little of what is before us! Ye *sons of God*, think on this approaching day, and of your heavenly inheritance.

5. Oh sinners! why do you not labour to become the *sons of God*, while you may consider what monuments of vengeance you will soon be, if you continue unregenerate. Alas! it is not known what misery you will then endure.

6. Ye happy sons of God, admire his love in conferring this dignity upon you. Consider what you were, and what God has done for you; yea, and what is prepared for you in heaven.

7. How honourable, happy, and glorious are the sons of God! How immense their privileges! How rich their inheritance! Why are men so backward to enter upon it? Why so afraid to enter their Father's house? Why so shy of glory? Why so fond of slavery and imprisonment? Be always on the wing, ready for your life!

SERMON LXX.

THE ONLY TRUE CAUSE OF REJOICING.

LUKE X. 20.

*In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you ;
but rather rejoice because your names are written in
heaven.*

1. **T**HIS answer Christ gave his disciples when they returned from their mission, flushed with victory over infernal powers.

2. This they mention with a tincture of vanity, as secretly proud of their new power.

3. Though they owned it his gift, they gloried in it as conferring some new honour and dignity on them.

4. Perhaps they were filled with notions of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and his conquests of other nations in favour of the Jews ; inferring that they should have an irresistible power over their enemies on earth, from the power they had over evil spirits.

5. Christ answers and checks this secret vanity, and points out to them a superior cause of joy. Rejoice not in this, viz. not principally in this, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

I. What by our names being written in heaven.

1. Heaven is compared to a city or corporation, in which a list or record is kept of all the citizens or freemen who are entitled to its privileges and immunities.

2. To have our names written in heaven, signifies to be citizens, or freemen of this city ; viz. to have a right to the inheritance there, and to all its privileges and enjoyments.

II. How may we know whether our name be written there ?

1. They see earthly things to be vanity, and that

heaven alone is a sufficient portion and happiness: yea, they count all thing things but loss in comparison of it.

2. They have a heavenly nature; very different from the world, like the citizens of heaven—pure and holy.

3. They have a peculiar love to all their fellow-citizens, who are heirs of the same place.

4. It is their chief concern to obtain an interest in heaven; not by lazy, lukewarm, spiritless prayers, but by vigorous, anxious, persevering desires.

III. Proofs of our names being written in heaven.

1. If your names are written in heaven, this is the greatest cause of joy you can possibly have; a joy that swallows up every other joy. As for instance, are you rich, industrious, frugal, and in affluent circumstances? This is indeed real cause of joy. Do you enjoy health? Are your bodies free from diabolical possession? Are you happy in your friends, relations, and every domestic life? Do you rejoice in the salvation of your country? that your forces are victorious over their enemies? that you have a prospect of living in safety and peace? that your possessions and property are safe? that you enjoy the blessings of a happy constitution? and that your lives are prolonged while others are cut off? Do you rejoice that you have the gospel, and the means of grace, and that these blessings are not likely to be taken from you? Still rejoice rather that these means are made effectual for your salvation. You should not only rejoice that your names are written in heaven, more than all other causes of joy, but also in opposition to all causes of sorrow.

2. If your names are not written in heaven, you have no solid and lasting joy in any thing. Rejoice not that you are rich and comfortable, while destitute of spiritual grace. Are you in good business? Do you enjoy health of body? What are even friends and relations, while the great God is your enemy?

3. As the happiness of the righteous, by enjoying this privilege, is above every other, so your sorrow in

not having your names there will swallow up all other sorrows. Have you lost your friends, your estates, and relations? This is sad, but nothing in comparison to the loss of heaven and God.

4. There should be nothing in the world grieve us comparable to this, the not having our names written in heaven.

SERMON LXXI.

THE SINNER REPROVED.

PROV. XXIX. 1.

He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

1. **A** PROVERB is a system of wisdom in miniature. It is a pertinent, striking observation expressed in as few words, that it may be the more easily remembered; and often in metaphorical language, that it may be the more entertaining.

2. A collection of proverbs has no connection, but consists of short, independent sentences, each of which makes full sense of itself; and therefore, in explaining them, there is no need of explaining the context; but we may select any particular sentence, and consider it separate of itself. Such a collection of wise sayings is the book of Proverbs.

3. Wise men in all ages, and in all languages, have often cast their observations into the concise, significant form of proverbs; but the sages of antiquity especially were fond of this method of instruction, and left legacies of wisdom to posterity, wrapt up in a proverbial dress; many of which, particularly of the Greek philosophers, are extant to this day.

4. Solomon chose this method of recording and

communicating his wise observations, as most agreeable to the taste of the age in which he lived. The sacred memoirs of his life inform us, that he spake *three thousand proverbs*, 1 Kings, iv. 32. Of these the most important and useful were selected either by himself, or afterwards by the men of Hezekiah; viz. by being appointed by Hezekiah to copy them off; and they are conveyed down to all ages in this cabinet of precious jewels, the Book of Proverbs.

I. How have we been often reprov'd?

1. We have been reprov'd from heaven and earth by good men, and our consciences; and it might be added, by the irrational creation, and even by infernal spirits.

2. Have not our affectionate fathers and mothers reprov'd us; yea, our masters and mistresses, who earnestly wish our welfare, have often become our monitors?

3. Have not some of us found a faithful monitor in the conjugal state; a husband or a wife, by a striking example, at least, if not in explicit language. Such are private assistants to the ministers of the gospel.

4. Has not a pious neighbour or friend dropt a word now and then in conversation which might have serv'd, and was intended, as a serious admonition: at any rate, their striking example has been a lesson to us repeatedly.

5. Nay, 'have you not been warn'd by the wicked, in seeing how eagerly some seek after worldly gain; and have you not been rebuked in more direct terms? Or perhaps, see him as vain as his neighbour.

6. How oft have you been warn'd from the pulpit. You have heard many ministers of Christ, who have been your solemn administrators in the name of their Master! Such loud, general, repeated admonitions as these ought to have weight.

7. The word of God has reprov'd you, shewing you the consequences of sin, and denouncing the divine displeasure. All its commands, prohibitions, and dissuaves, are so many warnings and admonitions to you.

8. God has often reproved you by his providence ; in kindly chastising you with personal and relative afflictions ; with sickness, pains, bereavements, hopes, and disappointments ; admonishing with sick beds, dying groans, in your families or neighbourhood ; yea, perhaps such as used to sit in our assemblies.

9. Has not Providence reproved by public calamities that have hovered over, or fallen upon our guilty land or nation, particularly by the ravages of war. Thus has Providence concerned in a thousand ways with the word, feelingly reproved us with his rod. We should always consider that the hand of Providence is the hand of God.

10. Has not God laid aside all instruments, and reproved by his Spirit ? As striving, reproving for sin, and alarming you with apprehensions of danger, exciting you to good resolutions, and serious thoughts of reformation.

11. Has not conscience fallen upon you with terrible, though friendly violence, and thus you have become your own monitors ; as if whispering to you, " This stupid course and neglect of God and eternal things, will never end well." Conscience has often honestly told you your doom.

12. I may add, that even the irrational creation is your monitor ; and though in silent, yet in forcible language, remonstrates against your conduct. Can you hear the warblers in every bush, giving their anthems to their Maker, without feeling yourselves reproved ?

13. Can you see the sun invariably rolling in his path, and the regular stated revolutions of the seasons, and of night and day, sensibly reprove your neglect of the returns of your devotion ? In short, does not all nature cry out against you ? Is not every thing you see, obedient to its Master, but men ?

14. May not infernal spirits serve as reprovers ? Can you think of their unwearied roaming over the earth in quest of souls as their prey, and their industry and toil to do mischief, without blaming your own negligence to save your souls, and do good ? And did you but hear the ghosts of the damned in hell,

their despairing cries accusing themselves for their lazy delays, neglecting time and the means of grace ; how loud and striking a warning would this be to you !

II. What is it to harden his neck ?

1. It is obstinately to refuse submission and reformation. A stiff neck is a metaphor often used in Scripture, to signify an unyielding, incorrigible spirit, resolute in disobedience, in spite of advice, persuasions, and reproofs.

2. To harden the neck, is to confirm one's self in disobedience, in opposition to admonition, or to refuse to reform, and strengthen one's self in the refusal, in spite of all the means of reformation.

3. It is to cherish obstinacy, to despise reproof, and resolve to follow a headstrong, impetuous self-will at all adventures.

4. The metaphor is taken from an unmanageable, sullen ox, that will not bend his neck to the yoke, nor himself draw under it ; but stiffens his neck, that it may not bear it ; and hardens it, that it may not feel it ; and the lash and the goad do not break his obstinate spirit, nor subdue him to willing subjection.

5. Thus nothing but a sullen, senseless beast can represent the stupid, unreasonable conduct of that man who hardens himself in sin against all sorts of reproof.

III. The threatened judgment : *he shall suddenly, &c.*

1. The stiff neck, that will not bend to the yoke of obedience, must be broken ; and its own stiffness renders it the more easily broken, for it is not easy to break what is yielding and pliable : but even the resistance of the stiff neck occasions its own ruin. It may harden itself into insensibility under reproof, but not under divine judgments.

2. He shall suddenly be destroyed, suddenly broken. Sudden ruin is aggravated, because it strikes a man into consternation, overtakes him unawares, surprises him at a disadvantage, when unprovided with methods

of escape, and also tears all his pleasing hopes from him.

3. Sudden ruin is the certain and natural consequence of a man's incorrigible obstinacy, in spite of admonition. He must be ruined, because he will not be warned, nor forsake the path that leads to destruction.

4. Without remedy: viz. there is no cure or medicine, or healing. There can be no preventive medicine to such a self-willed, headstrong creature, because he will not apply it, and even pushes off every friendly hand that would apply it; and no healing can be applied to that breach which admits no cure. The stiff neck is so broken, as never to be healed; he would not apply any remedy.

5. Reproofs and admonitions from God, and men, and conscience, are the great means of recovery to sinners; and while these are ineffectual, no other can possibly have any effect. How can he be reclaimed, who will sin in opposition to all restraints.

6. As this is the unavoidable doom of those who have been often reprov'd, but hardeneth his neck, have you not reason to fear and forbode this tremendous doom? If you resolve thus to live and die in your impenitence, you must be destroyed without remedy. Can you expect better means than you have had? Or can you expect greater efficacy upon them in time to come than formerly?

SERMON LXXII.

THE UPRIGHT MAN.

PS. XXXVII. 37.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; for the end of that man is peace.

1. **SINCERITY** is the sauce that seasons religion ; it is the jewel that God is most delighted with. Ps. li. 6.

2. All show of holiness without sincerity to enliven it, is but like folly set forth in its embroidery.

I. Who is the upright man ?

1. To be upright, signifies plainness of heart ; not plaited in folds, no double dealing : in his spirit there must be no guile.

2. The upright man has no subterfuges ; his tongue and his heart go together, as the dial with the sun.

3. The upright man is an *approved man* ; a man whom God and good men think highly of. The plainer the diamond is, the richer ; the more plain the heart is, the more it shines in the eyes of God.

Signs of uprightness.

1. The heart is given to God, and is for God : *My son, give me thine heart.* The high-priest, in cutting up the beast for sacrifice, first examined, if that was blemished, it was rejected. It is not the gift, but the heart, that he respects. An upright man, even in the midst of his infirmities, his heart is true ; not one day for sin, and another for God. God loves a broken heart, Hos. x. 2.

2. An upright man lives by an upright rule ; not by *opinions*, or *customs*, (the best guides may sometimes go *wrong*) but by *conscience*. A defiled conscience may err. Providences are not always a fit rule to go by : the wicked frequently prosper. The upright

make the word of God their guide : good men do not wholly rely on revelations.

3. Upright men act from upright principles, viz. faith working by love : he hears in faith, prays in faith. Prayer is the arrow, and faith is the bow out of which we shoot to the throne of grace. Faithless prayers are fruitless. While the weeping father's tears dropt to the earth, saying, I believe my unbelief ; his faith reaches to heaven.

4. Upright men live a life of love. Love is as the spring in a watch ; which carries them to heaven in a fiery chariot. Love meliorates and ripens every duty. Divine love is like musk among clothes. A small token sent in love is accepted. Hypocrites only serve God as the slave works in the gally. Their obedience is forced, like water out of steel by fire.

5. An upright christian has an upright end. God's glory is the upright man's mark. He prefers God's glory to whatsoever comes in competition with, or stands in opposition against it. If life and God's glory be laid in one balance, the latter outweighs. The hypocrite may serve God for gain or applause ; but the upright man prefers God's honour to his own.

6. Upright men are uniform in their practice. The tables were written on both sides. *Exod. xxxii. 15.* All the commands have same stamp of divine authority.

He walks soberly in acts of temperance ; righteously in acts of justice ; godly in acts of piety. *Matt. ii. 12.* Hypocrites will pick and choose their duties ; but upright men will neither palliate nor justify the sins of men : they will not keep back any part of God's truth, nor neglect any known duty for fear of losing a party.

7. Upright men are zealous for God. Uprightness is the white, and zeal the sanguine, which makes the right complexion of a christian. Zeal is a mixed affection of love and anger ; it boils up the spirits to the height, and makes them run over. Zeal is like a fire kindled from heaven. Can the true child bear to hear the father reproached ?

8. Upright men will not allow themselves in any sin; they dare not touch the forbidden fruit. Some sin may not only be as near to a man as his garment, but as dear to him as his right eye: and the devil can hold a man as fast by this one link, as by a whole chain of vices; but an upright christian takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through his beloved sin. Herod would sooner behead the Baptist, than behead that one single sin.

9. An upright man hath a liberal heart to maintain God's worship, and a liberal hand in supporting Christ's poor. The poor man's hand is Christ's treasury, into which the upright man is freely casting.

10. Upright men pursue after further degrees of holiness and sanctity, Job xvii. 9. He that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger; not in faint desires, but in vigorous exertions.

11. The upright man orders his conversation aright; he treads evenly, and walks as Christ did, 1 John, ii. 8. Though the main walk is within, yet our light must shine, that others may behold it. Though sincerity is in the heart, yet its frontispiece appears in conversation. Upright christians are like Solomon's temple—gold within and without. Sincerity is a holy leaven which will work it into life.

12. Upright men will be good even in bad times. The upright complexion, like laurel, keeps its freshness, and never changeth. The upright man's zeal is like the lamp on the Jewish altar; it never went out. Upright men never lose their integrity; but are like wine full of spirits, which is good to the last drawing.

13. An upright man endeavours to make others so. where there is life, there is a power of propagation. The upright man being in the place of God to his brother, he increases his knowledge, confirms his faith, and inflames his love; and if he sees his brother declining, he labours to recover him.

II. What by the perfect man?

1. Not that any man can have any absolute perfection, as this alone belongs to God; but we may have it in parts, though not in the degrees in which it is in God.

2. The upright man is perfect when compared with

others : Noah was perfect when compared with the profane world.

3. The upright man breathes after perfection ; therefore he is said not to sin : if in any point he fails, he weeps and prays till he recovers himself again.

4. God calls the upright man perfect, because he is purified by the blood of Christ ; hence called his spouse, his undefiled ; and he endeavours to complete this character, by an holy conversation. *As he was, so are we in this world ;* holy in heart and life.

III. The end of this upright and perfect man's character.

PEACE. The word peace includes all blessedness ; yea, it appeared so blessed to Balaam, that he desired it. Num. xxviii. 10.

1. Peace with God. *Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* The Jewish Rabbies said, Moses died with a kiss from God's mouth. The upright man dies embracing Christ, and keeping his promises.

2. He hath peace with conscience: He hath the witness in himself. His end must be peaceful, who hath a smiling God, and a smiling conscience. A good man has his paradise before he dies. He that dies with a good conscience, flies to heaven as Noah's dove to the ark, with an olive-branch in her hand.

3. He hath peace with the saints. He hath their good word ; they embalm his memory, and erect for him monuments of honour in their hearts. His end is peace, and he is renowned among the people of God. He inherits their praise, and is carried to his grave with a shower of tears.

4. He has also peace with the whole world, and desires that *holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.* Yea, his soul is so full of peace and love, that he wishes all the world to be as happy as himself. He is happy both in life and death.

Use.

1. See the great difference between the godly and the wicked in their end : the one is at peace, but the other is at war. The wicked live in a calm, but die in a storm. Job xxvii. 20. *A tempest steals him away in the night.*

2. The hypocrite's end is, their hope shall be cut off; and the apostate's end is, the latter is worse than the beginning.

3. A wicked man may die in presumption, but not in peace; he may hope all is well, but it is rather a fancy than a peace. Sometimes conscience is let loose, which spoils his peace.

4. The good man's life is like a ship that has had the waves beating on its sides; but the end is peace. A quiet harbour makes amends for a rough sea. He may have lived in storms, but he dies in peace.

5. His dying day is his marriage day; grace gives the sweet flowers of peace here, and the full crop of glory hereafter.

6. Then shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart, Psalm xxxii. 11. Peace is that never-fading garland which shall be set upon the head of the upright for ever.

SERMON LXXIII.

HOW TO BE STILL WITH GOD.

PSALM CXXXIX. 18.

When I awake I am still with thee.

1. **T**HE Scriptures are a spiritual paradise, and the Book of Psalms is like the tree of life in the midst of it.

2. The Psalms of David are both for delight and usefulness, like the trees of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii. 12, both for food and for medicine.

3. The Psalms are enriched with endless variety, and suited to every christian's state and condition.

4. They are such a store-house, that if a christian be dead, here he may fetch fire to enliven him; if he be weak in grace, here he may fetch armour to defend

him; if he be faint, here are cordials to strengthen him. To every condition there is a psalm suited to it.

5. In case of sickness, Psalm xli. 3. *Thou shalt make his bed in sickness.*

In case of reproach, iii. 11. *I was a reproach among mine enemies.*

Unkind dealing from friends, lv. 12. *Had it been an enemy, I could have borne it.*

In case of enemies, iii. 1. *Lord how are they increased that trouble me.*

In case of poverty, xl. 17. *I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.*

In case of temptation, lxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me.*

No returns of prayer, lxix. 3. *I am weary of my crying.*

In case of death, xxiii. 4. *Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil; thou art with me, with thy power to support, thy grace to sanctify, with thy love to sweeten; thy rod and staff do comfort me.* I have the staff of thy promises in the hand of my faith, and with this I can walk through the dark entry of death. Thus in every trouble, David's psalms, like David's harp, may serve to drive away the evil spirit of sadness.

I. The godly man's character—*He is still with God.*

1. David was not only higher in power and dignity than other men, but in sublime affections, having his heart and hopes above the world.

2. David lived in the world, and yet he was above the world; for as soon as he awaked, he was still with God. In heaven he was a seraphic saint, a moral angel, a bird of paradise; he was least alone when most alone—*still with God.*

3. It was not a thought and away, but his fixed temper—his soul still beat after God; not just an hypocritical thought, quickly over, Job xxvii. 10, but the constitution of David's soul was heavenly—*I am still with thee.*

II. Why was David's heart still with God?

1. Because the bias and bent of his heart was to-

wards God ; his heart was like the needle in the compass, it pointed heavenwards.

2. He was more with God than any where else, like a man that is always at home ; he may like excursions abroad betimes, but he is said to live there because he is most resident there.

3. It is the sweet temper of a gracious heart to be still with God. *I am still with thee.* David awaked in heaven.

4. Under the law, those creatures which crept on all fours were had in abomination ; but they which had wings and could fly, were accounted clean. Lev. xi. 20.

5. Those are unclean and abominable to God, whose souls creep upon the earth ; but they who have the legs and wings of grace to mount up with, these are pure and precious in the sight of God.

III. When is a man still with God ?

1. When his soul is in constant desire after him. His anchor is cast in heaven, and he is carried thither with the sails of desire. Psalm lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee.*

2. By constant contemplation ; thoughts are as travellers and passengers in the soul. The christian's thoughts are ever travelling towards the New Jerusalem. In David's dangers God was with him ; and in David's temptations he was still with God. The saints thoughts are all packed up to be gone.

3. The soul is still with God by love ; what we love our hearts eagerly run out after. Love hath this property, *it unites at a distance*—it fixes the heart upon the object beloved. When the eye cannot see him, the heart says, *saw ye him whom my soul loveth ?*

4. The soul is still with God by *communion with him*. Sweet intercourse and fellowship is the life of love. In prayer and sacraments we receive the kisses of his mouth.

5. The soul is still with God by faith. Unbelief is said to be a drawing back, Heb. x. 39, and faith, through the prospective glass of the promise, we look into heaven. The Israelites stood in the outer court of the temple, but the high-priest entered within the

vail, into the holy of holies ; thus the senses stand in the outward court of the body, but faith enters within the veil : It was Christ clothed in human nature, and sitting down above the angels. Faith embraces Christ eye to eye.

6. Christians are still with God in the whole course and tenour of their lives ; not only their heart, but their treasure is in heaven too, Phil. iii. 20. It is said of Christ, his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem, Luke ix. 53. A christian is known by his face : his demeanour and outward image should show that he is going to the Jerusalem above. There is a kind of angelic brightness on him ; he shines in holiness as Moses' face shined when he had been with God. His work is angels' work, a very heaven upon earth ; as it is said, Noah walked with God, Gen. vi. 9, so, though he meets with difficulties in the way, yet he still keeps his walk.

IV. Why is a good man's heart still with God ?

1. From the nature of grace ; it carries the soul upwards towards God. Grace is like fire ; its nature is to ascend. Had you the sharp eye of faith to see Christ, you would soon have the swift wing of desire to fly to him.

2. From the magnetic power of the Spirit, which both purifies and elevates, as the sun exhales and draws the heart towards God. *The Spirit lifted me up*, Ezek. iii. 14. In this life a christian is both checked and spurred ; checked by corruption, and spurred by grace.

3. He is still with God, as the centre of the soul ; while the heart is set on earth it shakes and is unsteady, but when turned to God, it is fixed and firm. A christian rests in God, as a bee in the hive, as the bird in the nest, and as Noah's dove in the ark.

4. The soul is still with God, because of those dear relations it hath to God. He is our Father, and where should a child go but to its parent. He is our husband, and where should the wife be but with her husband. He is our friend, and friends desire to be together. He is our rock, and where should believers

rest, but in the cliffs of the rock. God is the saint's treasure, and where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.

5. The soul is still with God, because of those rare excellencies which are in him, such as, 1. Fulness; every one desires to be at a fountain, Col. i. 19. A vessel may be full of water, and a chest may be full of silver or pearls, but in Christ is all fulness, bread to strengthen, wine to comfort, gold to enrich, and robes to clothe, Rev. iii. 18. He is all in all, Col. iii. 11. Thus there is a variety of fulness in Christ.

V. Examination.

1. Dost thou want quickening grace? Christ is the Prince of life, Acts iii. 15.

2. Dost thou want healing grace? Christ hath made a medicine of his own body to cure thee, Isa. liii. 5.

3. Dost thou want cleansing grace? There is the bath of his blood to wash thee: It cleanses from all sin, John i. 7.

4. This fulness in Christ is not like the water in the pipe, but as light in the sun: it dwells there.

5. Christ has not only the fulness of creation and of angels, but the fulness of the Godhead. The riches of Deity are in him; and the communication of this blessed fulness is that which satisfies the soul, and fills it brimful.

Use.

1. This shews us the art of being in heaven before our time, viz. by *being still with God*. A good christian begins his heaven here—grace translates him.

2. It reproves them that are never with God, but without him, of a wicked man it is said, God is not in all his thoughts; seldom if ever striking on him but with horror, as the prisoner thinks of the judge and the assizes.

3. If men are not with God, they still will be with the world. There is no finding Christ in an earthly heart. The world in general mind earthly things. This world is men's Diana. Phil. iii. 19. They are like Saul among the stuff, or like Siscera who had his head nailed to the earth, christians should stave off the world, that it get not their hearts.

4. It reproaches them that are seldom with God ; they are sometimes with God, but not still with him. Some christians, their life is so slow and unconstant, that it is hard to say, whether they have the life of grace at all.

5. Christians should imitate this pattern in the text : *Be still with God.* There is no going to heaven without beginning with it here. The church hath a crown of stars on her head, and the moon under her feet, Rev. xii. 4. Christ is not on the furrows, but on the pinnacle. It is unworthy of his profession, Jer. xlv. 5.

7. To be still with God is the most comfortable life, and the most durable felicity. To do this aright :

1. Get a right judgment of your state.
2. Watch over your heart every day.
3. Beware of remissness of duty.
4. Be much in communion with his saints.

SERMON LXXIV.

CHRIST'S LOVELINESS.

CANT. V. 16.

Yea, he is altogether lovely.

1. **I**N this book, called the Marriage Song, are all the strains of holy love set forth in the purest allegories and metaphors, such as strongly represent that affection and union between Christ and his church.

2. The text breathes forth the spouse's love to Christ, saying, *he is altogether lovely.* This whole book of Canticles is bespangled with the praises of Christ.

I. How does Christ appear transcendently lovely ? By Titles, Types, Resemblances, and Demonstrations.

1. By **TITLES**, which are asso many jewels being upon

his crown ; he is called *the desire of all nations, the Prince of Peace*, the Holy One of God, elect, precious.

2. By **TYPES**, which are either of Persons or Things.

By Persons, as typified by Moses, who was renowned in Israel, and whom the Lord knew face to face, Deut. xxxiv. 10. This appeared in four things.

1. In his natural beauty, he was Moses like, a goodly child, Exod. ii. 2. Josephus says, “ Moses was so fair, that he drew the eyes of all upon him, and that all who saw him were so amazed at his beauty, and fed on it with such delight, as to be unwilling to look off again.

2. In his education ; he was bred up awhile at court, and Pharaoh’s daughter set a crown of gold upon his head : but leaving the court he went and lived in the land of Midian, Exod. ii. 15. So Christ left the royal court of heaven to come and live in this world.

3. In his office, as being a Prophet, Deut. xxxiv. 10. He acquainted Israel with the mind of God, he gave them the two tables of the law ; so Jesus Christ is a Prophet also, and reveals to his people the mysteries of salvation ; unseals the book, and reveals his will. He is counted worthy of more glory than man, Heb. iii. 3.

4. In his noble acts. A temporal saviour, delivering the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage ; so Jesus Christ is a Saviour, who shall save his people from their sins, Matt. i. 21.

By *David*, who was a king. So Christ adorned with regal power, as a King to govern his people, Rev. xv. 3 ; and also to conquer his enemies, Psalm cx. 1, 2. David was a man after God’s own heart, which prefigured Christ, in whom God was well pleased. Matt. iii. 17.

By *Solomon*. 1. In his name, which signifies peaceable ; so Christ is called the *Prince of Peace*, Isa. ix. 7. All his wars tend to peace, a peace which passeth all understanding.—2. In his government ; his was a flourishing kingdom. Solomon surpassed all other kings for riches ; so Christ’s kingdom is so glorious, that all his subjects are kings. He reigns on earth : *Of his*

kingdom there is no end.—3. In his wisdom: He was the oracle of the age. He was wiser than all others. Christ had the unction of wisdom and holiness poured upon him without measure, John iii. 34. Behold a greater than Solomon is here.

3. By THINGS, as, 1. A pillar of a cloud and fire, which is Israel's guide through the wilderness, Ex. xiii. 21. Thus Christ *guides our feet into the way of peace.* The cloud was unerring, as God was in it; such is Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the light, John xiv. 6.—2. By manna, which resembles Christ in three things; 1. In figure, being a circular, Ex. xvi. 14. The circle is a figure of perfection, and thus typified Christ, who is all perfection. 2. He was prepared in an extraordinary manner; manna was meat cooked and dressed in heaven; God himself prepared, and then served it in. Thus Christ, like manna, was prepared and set apart. 3. Jewish Rabbi's said, suited itself to every one's palate; as whatever he desired, that he found in manna—so Christ suits himself to every one's condition, being full of quickening, strengthening, comforting virtue.

4. The mercy-seat representing the throne of grace, from which the Lord gave forth his oracles, and answers of peace to his people. Exod. xxv. 22. *There will I meet thee, and commune with thee.* Thus Christ is called a propitiation, through which we speak to God at his mercy-seat, by which our sins are forgiven.

5. The brazen-serpent, which being stung by fiery-serpents, then whosoever did look on the brazen serpent, were healed and cured. Five things attended this sting, viz. guilt, shame, horror, curse, death. Christ being like the brazen serpent, he must be looked upon with a penitent believing eye, cures these deadly stings, Zech. xii. 10.

6. By Noah's ark, which saved Noah and his family from the flood. Christ is the ark in which believers sail above the waves, and by which they keep from drowning. Thus Christ appears lovely by those things to which the Scriptures resemble him.

III. Resemblances of Christ in Scripture.

1. A rose, Cant. ii. 1. *I am the rose of Sharon.*

This is called the queen of flowers for colour and scent. Thus it shews the fragrant perfume which Christ sends forth. This rose is so sweet, it never loses its colour or fragrancy. So sweet is Christ the rose of paradise, that it makes us become a sweet savour to God, Ephes. i. 6.

2. A vine, John xv. 1, which is the noblest of plants, and to this is Christ compared. Lovely clusters grow on this vine—the fruits of justification and sanctification. These bunches of grapes hang upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We have need of Christ's offices, influences, and privileges; there is nothing in this vine we can do without.

3. A corner-stone, Peter ii. 6, as first, the whole weight of the building is upon the corner stones, so the weight of our salvation is upon Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 11. Again, the corner-stone unites together to two side walls of the building; so when God and man were at variance, Christ united them together, yea, even cemented them with his own blood.

4. A rock, 1 Cor. x. 3, in a threefold sense: 1. He is a rock for offence. Rocks break the waves, which come against the church with great vehemence. 2. For defence; doves hide in the rock, in the clefts of the rock, Cant. iii. 14. Christ's wounds are the clefts of the rock where believing souls hide themselves. 4. For comfort, and that two ways: A screen to shade off the heat; hence Christ is called, Isa. xxxii. 2, a *shadow for the heat*: he shades poor sinners from the scorching wrath of God. Honey also comes out of the rock—honey of promises, and oil of gladness.

5. A river in a dry ground, Isa. xxxii. 2. By nature we are like a scorching heath, barren and dry; but Christ sends forth the influences of his blood and Spirit, making us like the fields of Sharon, full of moisture and fertility.

6. A rich treasure, Ephes. iii. 8. The unsearchable riches of Christ, even angels can never dig to the bottom of this golden mine. These riches are only to be found in Christ. He is crowned with all the riches of the Deity.

7. A beautiful robe, Isa. lxi. 10. "*He hath covered*

me with the robe of righteousness. No robe of gold or ermine so honourable as this—in this robe we shine as angels in the sight of God. The high-priest's vestments, Exod. xxviii. 2, were composed of the mitre, robe, ephod of gold, and breast-plate of precious stones; these did but serve to set out this beautiful robe, wherewith a believer is adorned.

IV. Demonstrations. There are two in particular :

1. In himself; in the account of others.

1. In himself. 1. He is lovely in his person, as he was man, Psalm xlv. 2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men*; denoting excellency of beauty: and if on earth his body was so fair and beautiful, what must it be now he is in heaven? He is lovely as he is God-man, compared to Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12, which reached from earth to heaven. Christ is equal with the Father, both in power and dignity.

2. In his dispositions. Good-nature will render deformity lovely. Christ's disposition is loving and merciful, given to clemency and mercy. He delights in mercy, Micah vii. 18. He invites and begs of them to be saved, and as such knocks at the door of their hearts to save them. He would fain break their hearts, that he may pour in his suppling oil to heal their wounds.

3. In his sufferings, making expiation for our sins. He was most lovely on the cross, because there he shewed most love to us. He bled love at every vein. The more Christ endured for us, the more dear he ought to be to us. He also conflicted with the wrath of God, which he could not, had he not been more than man. The altar of wood was overlaid with gold, that so the fire on the altar might not consume the wood, Ex. xxvii. 2. This altar was certainly a type of Christ's human nature.

4. Christ was lovely in his graces, which embroidery bespangled and set him off in the eyes of the world. Grace was not in Christ as a quality, but as an essence of it. He was a pattern of meekness.

5. In his conversation. Like Saul and Jonathan, they were lovely in their lives and undivided at death. Christ's life was purer than the sun-beams; never did any one write without blotting before Christ. He is

called a Lamb without spot ; his lips never uttered deceit, nor was ever guile found in his mouth.

6. In the esteem of God, saints, and angels. They adore him. Yea, let all the angels of God worship him. 1. Christ is lovely to God the Father, who is infinitely taken with him, Isa. xlii. 1. *Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth.* Christ is the centre where all the lines of the Father's love do meet. 2. Christ is lovely in the esteem of the saints, 2 Thess. i. 10. *He shall be admired of all them that believe.* Well may saints admire Christ sitting in the bright robe of their flesh above the angels in glory. How lovely and beautiful to their nature united to the Deity. 2. Christ is lovely in the esteem of the angels. They adore him, Heb. i. 6. *Let all the angels of God worship him.* The cherubims were painted with their faces looking upwards, to shew, that the angels in heaven admire and are ravished with the amazing beauties of Jesus Christ.

Use.

1. Behold, as in a scripture-glass, the transcendent excellencies of the Lord Jesus. Well might St. Paul desire to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, 1 Cor. iv. 2. And no wonder the apostles left all to follow him, Matt. xix. 27.

2. Truly he is our light, which pulls off the vail, and draws aside the dark curtains of the night, making every thing appear in fresh colours. He is called *true light*, and the bright and morning star. Yea, he is called the *Sun of Righteousness*, Mal. iv. 2. The material sun rises and sets, but the Sun of Righteousness never sets. It may pull in its beams when the clouds of our sin come between, but repentance and faith brightens up the horizon. The sun only shines in the day, but Christ shines in the night of affliction and trouble.

3. Christ is our food. He is not only lovely to the eye, but to the taste, John vi. 55. *My flesh is meat indeed.* This princely fare is not for angels, but for us. *My blood is drink indeed* ; it is better than wine. Wine may be taken to excess, but Christ's blood cannot ; though a drop be sweet, yet the more the better,

the deeper the sweeter ! *drink abundantly O beloved.* Wine may be dangerous and hurtful in a fever ; but this wine of Christ's blood is best in a fever—it will allay the inflammation and refresh the soul.

4. Christ is our *life*, Col. iii. 4. *When Christ who is our life shall appear.* A sweet life makes every thing comfortable—men will lose a leg or an arm to preserve life. Christ was typified by the *tree of life in the garden*. That tree was a pledge of life, if continued in obedience. Adam's tree might preserve life, but not prevent death ; but this tree of life prevents death, John xi. 26. *Whosoever believeth in me shall never die*, viz. not die eternally. In Christ there is a three-fold life, 1. The life of grace. 2. The life of comfort ; and 3. The life of glory. This life is the highest elevation and perfection of the reasonable creature.

5. Christ is the mirror of beauty, the map of perfection, and the paradise of delight. He is the crown of the gospel ; if the gospel be a field, Christ is the pearl hid in it—if the gospel be the ring, Christ is the diamond in it. He is the glory of heaven. *The Lamb is the light thereof*, Rev. xxi. 23. Well might St. Paul account all things but dross for Christ—Phil. iii. 8.

6. If Christ be thus altogether lovely, then the reason why men do not embrace him, is because they are ignorant of his great beauty. The blind do not even admire the colours in the rainbow, who may cry out, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved.* Christ is a treasure, though he is hid to many ; to the natural man he appears like Moses with a vail. He does not want worth, but they want spiritual sight.

7. In many their knowledge has a threefold defect, viz. it is speculative without conviction, affliction, or operation. Men may have a speculation of Christ without knowing him convincingly ; they may have speculation without warmth of affection, or without a saving influence to lead to a holy life.

8. Behold his misery who lives and dies without Christ. A sinner in a state of nature is like an infant in his blood. The leper in the law was an emblem of a

sinner—he was known by his garments being torn, his head bare, his mouth covered, and he was to cry, Unclean ! Unclean ! This is the state of every unconverted sinner.

SERMON LXXV.

GOD'S LAW OUR DELIGHT.

ROM. vii. 22.

I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.

I. **T**HE nature and advantages of the law of God.

1. The law contains the *truth* of divine *precepts*. The two Testaments are the two lips by which the God of truth hath spoken to us about our sin, our misery, and the deserved wrath of God.

2. This law is holy, just, and good. Truth is adequate to the understanding, and goodness to the will.

3. To this law is added the gospel, without which it had been imperfect, and without which there had been no helps to perform its contents. The goodness and excellency of this law appears as follows :

(1.) This blessed law of God is a letter sent to us from heaven, indited to us by the Holy Ghost, and sealed with Christ's blood. How delightful it is to read over this love-letter.

(2.) It is a light that shines in a dark place. It is our pole-star to guide us to heaven—it was David's candle and lanthorn to walk by, Psalm cxix. 105.

(3.) It is a spiritual glass to examine ourselves by. David hath often examined himself by looking into it, and has much wisdom thereby, cxix. 104. It both shews our spots, and directs us how to have them taken

away. It was both a glass to look in, and a laver to wash away our spots by.

(4.) In this is contained our evidences of heaven ; to know we are heirs of, and have our names written in heaven, we must consult this law-book : *We know we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren*, John ii. 14. Here is our evidence.

(5.) The law of God is a place of ammunition, from which we fetch our spiritual artillery to conquer Satan. When Satan tempted Christ, he used this armoury, yea, three times Christ wounded the serpent with this sword ! How good it is to have our armour on when the enemy is in the field.

(6.) This law of God is our spiritual physic-book, viz. our book of receipts—here there is a receipt for every disease. Are we dead and dull ? *Thy word hath quickened me*, Psalm cxix. 50. Are our hearts hard ? *Is not thy word as a fire ?* Jer. xxiii. 29. If we be grown proud, *God resisteth the proud*, 1 Peter, v. 5. Are we guilty ? *Sanctify them through thy truth*, John xvii. 17. The law of God is like a physic garden, where we may walk and gather any herb to expel the poison of sin.

(7.) The law of God is a divine treasury to enrich us—here is knowledge and assurance to be found, Col. ii. 2. Here many truths are scattered, precious as diamonds, to adorn the *hidden man of the heart*. David made the law of God his heritage, Psalm cxix. 111, and also his pearl. Here we dig till we find heaven.

(8.) The law of God is our cordial in fainting times ; it is a strong cordial ; *that we might have strong consolation*, Heb. vi. 18. In affliction, this can turn water into wine ; worldly comforts are but weak consolations, as they cannot bear up against trouble, but the word affords strong consolations.

(9.) The law of God is *heavenly manna*, that suits itself to every christian's palate. If the soul desires to be quickened or strengthened, he may find all in this manna.

II. When do we delight in the law of God ?

1. When we are often thinking upon it ; what a man delights in, his thoughts are often running upon. The covetous man is said to *mind earthly things*. The precious promises are the conduit that hold the water of life, like the two olive branches, Zech. iv. through which the two golden pipes do empty the golden oil, Zech. iv. 12. These seal up pardon, adoption, and glory, Isa. xxxviii. 16.

2. If we delight in religion, nothing will keep us from it ; we shall love to converse with God in his word, in prayer, in sacraments. He that loves gold will trade for it. The merchant will compass sea and land to proselite money.

3. Those that delight in the law of God and religion will often be speaking of it. *They that feared the Lord spake often one to another*, Mal. iii. 16. David so delighted in God's testimonies, that he would even speak of them before kings, Psalm cxix. 46. The spouse in the Canticles could not conceal his love.

4. He that delights in God will give him the best in every service ; whom we love the best, shall have the best. He that delights in God shall give him the strength of his affections, and the cream of his duties. If he has any thing better than another, God shall have it. Hypocrites care not what they put God off with—they offer what costs them nothing. A prayer that has no wrestling in it they put God off with.

5. He that delights in God doth not much delight in any thing else ; they use worldly good as a convenience for their passage, or as a staff to walk with ; but when they get to their eternal rest, they will have no need of this Jacob's staff. The higher our affections are, the less the world will appear.

6. True delight in God and his law is constant. Hypocrites may have pangs of sorrow, and flashes of joy, which are soon over. The Jews for a season rejoiced in John's light. What a weariness to serve the Lord, when there is no delight in him.

III. How may we retain this delight in God ?

1. Set a high value and esteem upon the word. What the judgment prizeth, the affections embrace ; he that

values gold will delight in it. Slight thoughts of religion makes the affections dull and languid. David prized God's statutes more than much fine gold.

2. Pray for a spiritual heart ; earthly hearts cannot delight in spiritual mysteries. The earth puts out the fire. *Ye must taste that the Lord is gracious.* It is not enough to hear and read sermons, and promises, but we must taste them, which will be the joy and rejoicing of our heart, Jer. xv. 16.

3. To delight in the law of God, we must purge out the delight of sin ; sin will poison this spiritual delight. To have God's law sweet, let not wickedness be sweet in your mouth, Job xx. 12. When sin is your burden, Christ will be your delight.

Use.

1. Let christians labour for this, to let their delight be in the law of God.

2. How thankful should those be, who can find this spiritual delight in God and his law.

3. How David blessed God, that the people offered so cheerfully to the building of the temple—their willingness was more than their offering.

4. It is a great blessing to have this promptitude and alacrity in God's service ; delight animates the spirits in duty—then we act to purpose in religion.

5. Christians are never drawn so powerfully and sweetly, as when the chain of delight is fastened to their hearts.

6. Without this delight, all our praying and hearing is like water spilt upon the ground ; it loseth both its beauty and its reward.

7. Then let believers bless God, who hath oiled the wheels of their soul with delight, so as to run without weariness.

8. For thy comfort be assured, thou shalt not want any thing thy heart can desire, Psalm xxxvii. 4. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

SERMON LXXVI.

HOW TO MEDITATE IN GOD'S LAW.

PSALM i. 2.

And in his law doth he meditate day and night.

1. **G**RACE breeds delight in God, and delight breeds meditation.

2. This essential duty is a great nourisher of religion.

3. When the godly are said to meditate day and night, it is not meant they should do it without interruption; but like prayer, we should set apart some time every day for that holy exercise.

I. The nature and duty of meditation.

1. Meditation is the soul's retiring of itself, that by serious and solemn thinking of God, that heart may be raised up to heavenly affections; which when done, we must look upon ourselves above an unhappy world. *Christ went apart to pray*, Matt. xiv. 23. *And Isaac went out to meditate in the field*, Gen. xxiv. 63. *Abraham like, who left his servant and the ass at the bottom of the hill*, Gen. xxii. 5. St. Bernard used to say at the church door, "Stay here all my worldly thoughts, that I may converse within the temple."

2. Meditation is a serious and solemn thinking on God, with intenseness, so as to gather the thoughts: it must have a fixed heart upon the subject. A wise christian is like the artist, he views with seriousness, and ponders these things. Luke ii. 19. Meditation heals the soul of its diseases and earthly mindedness.

II. How meditation is a duty.

1. It is a duty improved; not arbitrary. He who hath bid us believe, hath also bid us to meditate. Josh. i. 8. *This book of the law shall not depart out of*

thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.

2. It is a duty opposed. As every good duty is against corrupt nature, nature is strangely averse to meditation. We are swift to hear, but slow to meditate. To think of the world is easy; but it is hard to meditate. How necessary is self-denial; and yet the heart is much against it—nothing more so.

III. The difference between meditation and memory.

1. Meditation is sweeter than memory. The memory is the chest to treasure up things in; but meditation is the palate to feed on it. The memory is like the ark, in which the manna was laid up; meditation is like the Israelites eating of it. There is as much difference betwixt a truth remembering, and a truth meditated on, as between a cordial in a glass, and drunk down.

2. To remember a truth without meditating on it, will but create matter of sorrow another day. How awful to remember many excellent sermons about Christ and heaven, without being the better for them.

IV. How meditation differs from study.

1. They differ in their nature; study being a work of the brain; but meditation, of the heart. Study sets invention to work; but meditation, the affections.

2. They differ in their design; as the design of study is notion; but the design of meditation is piety. The design of study is the finding out a truth; but the design of meditation is the spiritual improvement of it. The one searcheth out the vein; the other digs out the gold.

3. They differ in their design; as the design of study leaves a man no better, being like a winter sun, which has little warmth and influence; but meditation leaves the mind in a more holy frame; it melts the heart when frozen, and makes it drop tears of love.

V. The subject matter of meditation.

These are the attributes of God, which are the seve-

ral beams by which the divine nature shines forth to us ; as follows.

1. Meditation on God's omnipotence. His eye is continually upon us ; our thoughts are unveiled before him. He knows the words we speak, and the very thoughts we think. God weighs and numbers our steps, when he makes a critical observation of our actions. This will produce the following effects.

(1.) It would be a curb to check and restrain us from sin. Will the thief steal while the judge looks on ?

(2.) It would tend to make the heart sincere. Job saith, *Doth he not see all my ways ?* If I look at my own interest more than Christ's, the God of truth takes notice.

2. Meditation on God's holiness. This is the embroidered robe God wears : the glory of the godhead. *He is glorious in holiness*, Exod. xv. 11. You may as well separate weight from lead, or heat from fire, as holiness from the divine nature. Sin is diametrically opposite to his essence. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.* To meditate on the holiness of God, it (1.) will be a means to change us into the same image, similitude and likeness. Holiness is an angelic brightness, and tends to change us into the image of God.

3. Meditation on the wisdom of God. His wisdom shines forth in his providence, and guides all things regularly and harmoniously ; he can bring *light out of darkness*. He can make use of the injustice of men to do that which is just. Therefore to meditate on divine wisdom would tend to calm our hearts, and keep them quiet.

4. Meditation on the power of God. This is visible in the creation : *He hangs the earth upon nothing*. Nothing can stand before a creating power. He can work with or without instruments. An earthquake can make the earth tremble, and remove it out of its place.

God can suspend natural agents, or cause the sun to stand still. To think on God's power will be a great stay to our faith.

5. Meditate on the mercy of God, which is an innate disposition in God to do good. Psalm lxxxvi. 5, *Thou art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy.* Holiness and justice without mercy is dreadful. God's justice reacheth to the clouds; but his mercy reacheth above the clouds. Justice goes a foot pace, Gen. xviii. 21; but mercy hath wings. God's mercy is like Aaron's oil, which was not only on his head, but *went down to his skirts.* To think on God's mercy, should be a powerful loadstone to draw sinners to repentance.

6. Meditate on the truth of God. Mercy makes the promise of God, and truth performs it. Psalm lxxxix. 55, *I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail.* God can as well deny himself as his word. *He is abundant in truth,* Exod. xxxiv. 6. God doth more than he hath said; never less. God may sometimes delay a promise, but never deny it. The promise of Israel's deliverance lay four hundred and thirty years, as it were, under ground; but when the time came, it did not go a day beyond his reckoning. Exod. xii. 41. *The Strength of Israel will not lie.* Sam. xv. 29. To meditate on the truth of God will both make us ambitious to imitate him, and a pillar of support.

7. Meditation on the love of Christ, who is as full of love as it is of merit. What but love could save us? Love was the wing on which he flew to the virgin's womb. He did not love us because we were worthy, but by loving us made us worthy. Saints are like letters of gold on Christ's heart, which can never be erased out. How calculated to make us love him again!

8. Meditate on the guilt of sin. We were in Adam, as in a common head, or root; and by his treason, our blood is tainted; and this guilt bringeth shame. We are not only guilty, but filthy; the poison of his nature is disseminated to us. Head bruised, liver swelled, lungs perished, blood inflamed, and feel gangrened, mind dark, memory slippery, heart hard, will stubborn: all wounds from head to foot.

9. The curse of the law, which is like a blast upon fruit, which keeps it from thriving. Sin is not

only defiling, but damning; not only a spot in the face, but a stab in the heart. Sin brings forth the roll written with curses against the sinner. To meditate would make us afraid.

10. The variety of the creature. The best wine is froth; the sweetest rose has its prickles; and the purest comforts their dregs. The world is like a looking-glass, which represents that truth is not to be found. To meditate on this, is like digging about the roots of a tree, to loosen it from the earth.

11. The excellency of free grace. Grace is precious in its original, and in its nature. It is the enamel of the soul; it is the signature and engraving of the Holy Ghost. Grace purifies and adorns. Gifts commend us to men; but grace to God.

12. The state of our own souls. The great work lies at home. Solomon's advice is good; know the state of thy flocks. Prov. xxvii. 23. For want of this, men are like travellers, skilled in other countries, but not at home. Self guilt and presumption is the reason why men do not like to look at home, lest they should find what would trouble them.

13. Upon final apostacy. How sad to begin to build, and not be able to finish! To fall away finally, is a God-affronting, and a Christ-reproaching sin. Jer. ii. 19. That which begins in hypocrisy, ends in apostacy. *Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my foot slip not,* Psalm xvii. 5.

14. Meditate on death, judgment, heaven and hell. Think how awful it will be to miss of meeting Christ with joy at the last day! Consider the uncertainty, nearness, and the awfulness of dying. This would bring down pride, make us husband time, bridle temperance, and help us to lay in provision against the time.

15. The day of judgment. 1. The solemnity of this trial; *the trumpet shall sound*. 2. The universality of the trial; *we must all appear*. 3. The impartiality of the trial; *he will judge the world in righteousness*. 4. The exactness of the trial; *he will thoroughly purge his floor*. Not a grave, or sin, but

Christ's fan will discover the consequence of this trial. He will separate the good and bad. Think on that court from whence there is no appeal. This will make us examine our actions, and labour to approve ourselves to God.

16. On hell. The pain of loss. Matt. xxv. 10. *The door was shut.* To be cast out of God's presence, this embitters the condition of the damned. It is like mingling gall with wormwood. The pain of sense. Psalm ix. 17. *The wicked shall be turned into hell,* 'The place of hell is a place of torment. Luke xvi. 28. 1. Fire. Rev. xx. 15, called a lake of burning fire. Some say it will consist both of spiritual and material fire; the one to torture the soul, and the other the body. 2. Worm. Mark ix. 44, *Where the worm dieth not.* This is the gnawing of a guilty conscience. So great will be the extremity of the fire which burns, and the worm which bites, that there will follow gnashing of teeth, Matt. viii. 12. To endure this will be intolerable, and to avoid it, impossible. 3. Company; the devil and his angels. 1. Their ghastly deformity makes hell look blacker. 2. Their deadly antipathy, fired with rage: first they are tempters, then tormentors. Sin, like Samson's foxes, carries fire-brands.

17. On heaven. Christ hath taken possession of heaven in the name of all believers. Heaven must be glorious, since God is its builder, and inhabitant. Beauty to the eye, music to the ear, and joy to the heart; and this to the poorest as well as the richest.

18. Eternity, compared to intellectual sphere, whose centre is every where, and circumference no where. To the godly it will be a day without sun-set; and to the ungodly, a night without sun-rising. The soul once landed, is past all storms: it will be for ever with the Lord.

VI. Application.

1. Has not God provided liberally for you?
2. Has not he kept you from many dangers?
3. Has not he spared you a long time?
4. Has he not given you sufficient grace and means?

5. Has he not vanquished Satan's host ? and

6. Given you many signal deliverances ?

Exhortation.

1. Let this raise us to thankfulness.

2. Let it engage us to obedience.

3. Our God is no hard Master.

4. Consider the end of the word and ordinances.

Objections.

1. *I have so much business.* The errand God sent about, is salvation ; and to attain the end, we must use the means.

2. *It is hard.* Our salvation cost Christ's blood ; it may therefore cost us some sweating. The fittest time is the morning hour, before the world gets about their business. Job rose early to offer sacrifice.

3. How long ? At least an hour each day.

4. Meditation makes the word profitable.

5. Makes us sincere, and balances the heart.

6. It is the bellows of our affections.

7. It fits us for hearing and prayer, and is an antidote against sin ; a cure of covetousness, it banishes vain thoughts, and is a prospective glass. Read before you meditate. Do not multiply subjects.

SERMON LXXVII.

THE DANGER OF BEING DECEIVED.

GAL. vi. 7, 8.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

I. **T**HE great danger of being deceived: whence does it arise?

1. From the various and contrary opinions of men. How many are deceived as to the meaning, veracity, or importance of practical religion. Hence many zealously assert, what others deny; and numbers lay great stress on what others do not, or at least think it of no great moment.

2. By our folly and inattention we are in danger of being deceived. How attentive are many to worldly concerns, while they neglect and disregard their eternal interests. God says, *My people are foolish, sottish children, and they have no understanding.* St. Paul says, *We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures.*

3. We are in danger of being deceived by the number and subtlety of our spiritual foes. Satan, the world and the flesh, are three powerful, ensnaring enemies; and what fatal influences to deceive unthinking mortals. This is evidently clear.

4. But the greatest danger arises from ourselves. Our own hearts deceitful, and desperately wicked, and ready to betray us on every occasion. How many hold deceit rather than truth, who hold it fast, and will not let it go.

5. Erroneous doctrines have a particular tendency to deceive. Hence, heretical seducers are often mentioned in the Scriptures, and we are often cautioned to beware of them.

II. Shew that none need be deceived, if they take heed to themselves.

1. The frequent cautions in Scripture both intimate we are in danger, and guard against it. To improve the light God has given, is the way to be kept from being deceived by others.

2. Religious duties are plain and obvious, that they are written as it were in sun-beams, so that he who runs may read them. Hence the law is a lamp to our feet, and a light in our paths.

3. God has promised to be our instructor and guide, if we apply to him for direction. God says, *I will guide thee with mine eye.* David said, *Shew me thy ways, teach me thy paths, lead me in the way everlasting.*

III. How may we avoid being deceived?

1. We must not be too credulous to receive any thing as the truths of God, without just and satisfactory evidence. To embrace principles without divine authority, provokes God, either to permit them to believe a lie, or to be driven to and fro with every wind of doctrine. Hence we are exhorted to *prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.*

2. Not to be deceived, we must get our souls established, and brought under the abiding influences of divine grace. Thus we are exhorted to be *rooted, built up, established in the faith, rooted and grounded in love.*

3. Not to be deceived, we must not be self-willed nor self-confident. *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. Be not wise in thine own eyes.*

4. Not to be deceived, we must be resolute and steady in the faith and profession of what we believe, and not be swayed by the favour or fear of man.

5. Not to be deceived, we must guard against an irregular desire of novelty. An immoderate desire after new opinions, as this is an evidence of a weak and unstable mind, and has a peculiar tendency to lead people into an error, both in faith and practice.

6. Not to be deceived, we must pray earnestly for the direction of the Holy Spirit, to guide us into all truth. A dark understanding, corrupt affections, in-

ordinate self-love, preconceived opinions and prejudices, greatly endanger our being deceived in the things of God.

IV. Practical improvement.

1. How lamentable, that so many professing christians are so woefully deceived, in respect of faith and practice.

2. It is still more lamentable, that generally people are never more conceited with themselves, than when they are most deceived.

3. But it is still more awful, that many will not be undeceived, but hold fast their deceit, though both it and the danger be clearly discovered to them. How many find their wickedness correct them, and their backslidings reprove them, and yet they will not lay it to heart, so as to break them off.

4. The most lamentable of all is about things of the last moment and importance ; the eternal happiness and salvation of the soul.

5. There have been many deceivers and seducers in every age ; there are many in our days, and will be to the end.

V. In what sense people may be said to mock God.

1. When they take the advantage of secrecy to commit any sin without fear. Many will not sin publicly in the sight of men ; and yet when darkness and solitude favours them, they will indulge their criminal desires, without fear of God.

2. People mock God when they cover their wicked purposes with specious pretences to religion and sanctity. Thus Saul did in sparing the best of the sheep and cattle, under pretence of sacrificing them to the Lord. Thus Pharisees devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers.

3. Those who neglect duties upon slight and vain pretences. When men very deliberately omit their duties, or commit sin, this is bidding defiance to his power, and mocking him.

4. This may be done by performing duties hypocritically. Although their hearts are not engaged nor animated with a principle of love to God, and a de-

sire, sacred regard and authority, yet they perform them, not considering, that if the heart be not sincere, all duties are but mere flattery of God—mere mockery.

5. They mock God, who confess their sins solemnly, and vow a reformation, and yet return again to their follies.

6. They mock God, who rest in a partial reformation, forsake some sins, and yet retain others. God requires unreserved conformity to his holy law, in thought, word, and deed; and every christian should aim after this, without which it is only mockery.

7. They mock God, who delay serving him at present, from a pretence that they will do it some time after, or when old.

VI. None can mock God, and escape punishment.

1. God cannot be mocked, or imposed upon, because he is omniscient. All our ways are naked and open to him.

2. None can mock God, and escape vengeance, will appear, if we consider, that people of this character, can only hope to escape punishment, upon these three accounts. 1. They may suppose that mocking God, is a crime that does not deserve punishment. 2. That though he has threatened to punish such, yet he will change his purpose. 3. That he is not able to punish such, according as he has threatened.

Use.

1. Seeing God cannot be mocked, let us seek uprightness both of heart and life.

2. Let us maintain an habitual sense of God's unchangeableness.

3. Let us seek after truth and sincerity.

VII. What by sowing to the flesh and Spirit.

1. It may mean human nature, or the body with its senses and appetites; and by the spirit is meant, the soul with its powers and faculties. These terms signify, human nature, either as actually sunk into an abyss of moral corruption and depravity, or rectified and moved by the healing power of divine grace.

2. The second term, sowing and reaping, means the habitual bent of men's hearts, and the prevailing

tenor of their lives and actions, with the natural result or fruit of them.

3. The fruit of the one is corruption ; of the other, is everlasting life, which will be the final portion of all mankind.

To sow to the flesh,

1. Is to live a corrupt and sensual life, indulging irregular inclinations and appetites, without any regard to law, conscience, reason, or religion.

2. To prefer the body and its qualifications to the glory of God, and the interests of the soul. We read of some who minded earthly things, &c.

3. They sow to the flesh, who abandon themselves to a voluptuous and sensual life. We have fowl, fish, and beasts, but to be used in moderation and sobriety.

4. They sow to the flesh, who do not mortify their irregular passions, but indulge them, without aiming at complete victory over all sin and temptation.

5. They sow to the flesh, who make religion, and the exercises of it, subservient to their carnal and worldly designs. Many are religious, to stop the clamours of conscience : but those who sow to the spirit, are most anxious and solicitous about spiritual and everlasting interests. They see that all things are vanity.

VIII. The effects of sowing to the flesh and spirit.

The one is *corruption* ; the other *life eternal*. The term corruption is used in Scripture various ways ; but here to express all kinds of misery, and death itself. It more especially implies,

1. The hardships and slavery which attend the service of sin. What a drudgery do men's lusts usually subject them to. They tug at the oar of sin, and toil for their own damnation.

2. To reap corruption, implies a total disappointment of all that satisfaction, pleasure, and advantage, expected in their sinful courses. They promise themselves much satisfaction in gratifying their desires ; but the fruit of all is nothing but vanity and vexation.

3. It implies the intolerably bitter fruits of sin,

which they who sow to the flesh shall feel in the other world : endless woe and misery.

4. They shall reap corruption, because thereby they render themselves utterly incapable of any other effect of things, but everlasting : the punishment of loss and of sense.

1. The punishment of loss consists in the loss of the heavenly happiness and glory, which is the natural fruit of wickedness.

2. The positive part of the punishment of sinners in the future world, is the genuine fruit of what they have sown, or of their own wickedness. There are three ingredients in their punishment. 1. Weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth : this will arise from the reflection of an enraged conscience. 2. The accusations and stings of their own guilty consciences. It is by their own wicked actions that they have sown these seeds of bitter anguish, horror, and remorse. 3. The impetuous rage after those earthly enjoyments, which they are for ever dispossessed of. An intense desire, without being satisfied.

5. Those who sow to the spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting ; not only by the institution of God, but also from the nature of the thing itself. Such have the earnest and felicity of heaven already. They have a meetness within for that blessed state.

Lastly. Some practical improvement.

1. See and admire the wisdom and justice of God in the punishment of sin. There is an inseparable connexion between holiness and happiness, and between wickedness and misery.

2. This consideration affords the clearest ground for vindicating the justice of God, in the present punishment of impenitent transgressors.

Use.

1. The demerit of sin will be according to the offence.

2. The dignity of the person enhances the offence.

3. The designs of wickedness are punished, when discovered.

4. God has threatened eternal misery to all who violate his laws.

5. When he inflicts eternal misery, he only gives them their own choice.

6. They are not surprised into hell, without being told of their danger ; he has set blessing and cursing, life and death before them.

SERMON LXXVIII.

THE RESURRECTION-DAY.

JOHN V. 28, 29.

The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves, shall hear, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.

1. **E**VER since sin and death hath entered into the world, this earth hath been a vast grave, or burying-place for her children.

2. In every age and country, that sentence has been executed, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* The earth has been arched with graves, and the bottom of the sea paved with the bones of men.

3. Human nature was at first confined to one pair ; but how soon, and how wide did it spread ! How inconceivably numerous are the sons of Adam ! How many generations have succeeded in near 6000 years !

4. Let imagination call up the young children that just appear, and are taken away ; of the grey-headed, that had a long journey through life ; the bloomy youth and middle-aged ; yea, from all countries and in all ages—how vast and astonishing the great multitude !

5. And shall they lie there always? Shall this curious workmanship, the body, always lie in ruins, and never be repaired? He that formed them at first can make them anew, and repair the wastes of time and death. But what is declared will be the case, this is fully revealed in the text.

1. The awful voice of Christ at the last day.

1. The voice of the Son of God here means the sound of the archangel's trumpet, which is called his voice, because it will be sounded by his *orders*, and attended with his *power*.

2. This all-quickenings call is frequently foretold in scripture. St. Paul says, *I shew you a mystery, we shall not all sleep*; viz. mankind will not all be asleep in their graves when that day comes, who cannot have a proper resurrection; yet they shall pass through a change equivalent to it; *we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*. No sooner is the alarm heard, than all the living shall be transformed, and become incorruptible.

3. This awful prelude of the trumpet is also mentioned in 1 Thess. iv. 15. *Then we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep*, not be before them in meeting our descending Lord; for *he shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God*; viz. a God-like trump, such as becomes his majesty to sound, and the dead to hear. The dead in Christ shall rise first, viz. before the living shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and when risen and transformed, they shall ascend together to the place of judgment.

4. Let us realize the majesty and terror of this universal alarm. When the dead are sleeping in their silent graves; and the living, thoughtless, and not apprehensive of the awful event; some asleep, some in their pleasures, eating, drinking, marrying, or giving in marriage. Some laying schemes for riches and honours, and others in the very act of sin. The generality stupid and careless about the concerns of eternity, and the dreadful day just at hand; and but a

few here and there conversing with, and looking for God.

5. In short, when there are no more visible appearances of this approaching day, than of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, on the fine morning in which Lot entered into Zoar; then, in that hour of security, suddenly shall the heavens open over the world—then shall the all-alarming clangour break over their heads, like the clap of thunder in a clear sky! The living will then turn their amazed and glaring eyes upon the strange phenomenon. A few hear the long-expected sound with rapture, and lift up their heads with joy; while the thoughtless will be struck with the wildest horror and consternation!

6. Immediately the sound will reach all the mansions of the dead, and in a moment they are raised, and the living are changed. This will animate the saints, but it will strike terror into the thoughtless sinner! Should this alarm now take place, what terror would many be thrown into. Such will be the terror of the great day. Sinners will be the same timorous self-condemned creatures then as they are now. Then they to whom the ministers of Christ now preach in vain, these they must hear! For the text further says,

7. All that are in their graves shall hear without exception. Now many calls, reason pleads, conscience warns; but yet multitudes will not hear: but this voice must reach all the millions of mankind; none can stop their ears. Infants, giants, kings and subjects, all ranks, all ages of mankind, must hear the call. The living will start and be changed, and all the dead will instantly rise at the sound of the trumpet!

8. Wherever the fragments of the human frame are scattered, this call shall reach and speak them to life. This voice will summons dead bodies to arise, and the soul that once animated them to appear, and be united to them, either in heaven or hell. To the grave, *Arise, ye dead!* To heaven, *Ye spirits of just men made perfect,* descend to the world, whence

you originally came, and assume your new-formed bodies.

II. The dead rising : *they shall come forth.*

1. Methinks I see the earth heaving, charnel-houses rattling, tombs bursting, graves opening ! Now the nations under ground begin to stir. There is a noise and a shaking among the dry bones. Even the dust is all alive and in motion, and the globe breaks and trembles, as with an earthquake, while the vast army is working its way through, and bursting into life.

2. The ruins of human bodies are scattered far and wide, and have passed through many and surprising transformations. A limb in one country, and the trunk in another, and perhaps the ocean rolling between. Multitudes have been eaten by beasts and birds of prey, and incorporated with them; and some have even been devoured by their fellow men in the rage of hunger, or of an unnatural cannibal appetite, and digested into a part of them.

3. Multitudes of them having mouldered into dust, and been blown about by winds, and washed away with water, or it has petrified into stone, or been burnt into brick, to form dwellings for posterity ; or else grown up into grain, trees, plants, and other vegetables, which are the support of man and beast, and transformed into flesh and blood.

4. But through all these changes, not a particle that was essential to one human body, has been lost, or incorporated with another human body, so as to become an essential part of it. And as to those parts not essential, they are not necessary to the identity of the body, and therefore we need not think they will be raised again. The omniscient God knows how to collect, distinguish, and compound all these scattered and mingled seeds of our bodies.

5. And now, at the sound of the trumpet, they shall all be collected, wherever scattered, all properly sorted and united, however confused, atom to its atom, and bone to its fellow bone. Methinks you now see the air darkened with fragments of bodies, flying from country to country, to meet and join their proper parts!!! Then, my brethren, your dust and mine shall

be reanimated, organized ; and though after our skin worms destroy this body, yet in our flesh shall we see God, Job xix. 16.

6. How vastly will the frail nature of man be then improved. Our bodies the same, but vastly different in quality, strength, agility, and capacities for pleasure or pain, in beauty or deformity, in glory or terror, according to the character of those they belong. Matter is capable of prodigious refinements and alterations ; and then it will appear in the highest perfection.

7. The bodies of the saints will be gloriously formed, incorruptible, and without the seeds of sickness and death. The glorious body of Christ carried to the greatest perfection matter is capable, will be the pattern after which they shall be formed. *He shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto Christ's glorious body*, Phil. iii. 21 ; because flesh and blood in its gross and frail state, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*.

8. The bodies of the saints will then be able to bear up under the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory ; it will no longer be a clog, or an incumbrance to the soul, but a proper instrument and assistant in all the external services and enjoyments of the heavenly state.

9. The bodies of the wicked will also be improved, but their improvements will all be terrible and vindictive. Their capacities will be enlarged, to be made capable of greater misery : they will be strengthened, but only to bear the heavier load of torment. Their sensations will be made quicker, that they may feel the more exquisite pain. They will be raised immortal, that they may not be consumed by everlasting fire, or escape punishment by dissolution or annihilation.

10. In short, their augmented strength, their enlarged capacities, and their immortality will be their eternal curse ; and they would gladly exchange them for the fleeting duration of a fading flower, or the faint sensations of an infant. They would most gladly rejoice in self-annihilation.

III. The resurrection, both of life and death.

1. Being summoned from the graves to stand at the bar, and brought out of prison by angelic guards, to pass their last trial; where there will be found persons of very different characters: the righteous Judge of the earth will accordingly pronounce their different dooms.

2. See a number which no man can number, openly acquitted, pronounced blessed, and welcomed into the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Now they enter on a state which deserves the name of life: they shine brighter than the stars or the firmament: they mingle with the angels, and behold the Saviour whom unseen they loved: they dwell in intimacy with their God, in the exalted services of the sanctuary.

3. They shall never more feel or fear the least touch of sorrow, pain, or misery; but shall be as happy as their natures can admit for ever. What a glorious new creation, of creatures formed of the dust! And shall we, feeble, dying, sinful creatures share in this happiness? Happy would it be, if all the sons of men were partakers of it.

4. As to sinners, see them bursting into life, from their subterranean dungeons, hideous shapes of deformity and terror, expressive of the vindictive design for which their bodies are repaired. Horror throbs through every vein, and glares wild and furious in all their eyes: every joint trembles, and every countenance looks gloomy. Now the day is come of which they were often warned in vain; and they will then shudder at those terrors of which they once made light.

5. The business for which they are raised, is to be tried, convicted, condemned, and dragged away to execution. Conscience has anticipated the trial in a separate state; and as soon as the soul and body is united, conscience does its office again, and ascends the throne, and begins to accuse, convict, pass sentence, to upbraid, and to torment. The sinner is condemned even at his own tribunal, before he arrives at

the bar of the Judge. The first act is a conviction that he is condemned, and he enters the court, knowing beforehand how it will go with him. When he is ordered to the sentence denounced against him, thundering out, *Depart from me, ye cursed*: it was but just what he expected.

6. Now, he can flatter himself with vain hopes, and shut his eyes against the light of conviction; but then he must know the worst of his case. The formality of the judicial trial is necessary for the conviction of the world, but not for him; his own conscience having already determined his condemnation. But to convince others of the justice of his doom, he will have a fair trial.

7. With what horror does he view the burning throne and frowning face of the Judge! That Christ whom he once degraded, how does he wish for a covering of rocks and mountains to conceal him from his angry eye! but in vain! Appear he must, and be ordered on the left hand among the criminals. And now the trial comes on: all his evil deeds, his omissions and commissions: all mercies abused, and chastisements despised, or neglected, with every idle word, nay, his most secret thoughts and dispositions are all exposed, and brought into judgment; and when the Judge puts it to him, saying, *Is it not so, sinner?* conscience obliges him to confess, and cry out, *Guilty! Guilty!*—Being convicted and left without plea and all excuse, the Supreme Judge pronounces the sentence.

III. The blessedness of having done good, &c. &c.

1. To do good, implies to keep all God's commandments, as they respect God, ourselves, or our neighbour, whether agreeable to our natural constitution or not, whether enjoined or forbidden, whether regarding the heart or the life.

2. An uniform, impartial regard to all God's commandments of every kind, and at all times, is implied in doing good. If we do every thing because God commands it, we should do every thing he does command.

3. To do good acceptably, implies a change of nature, and a new principle. Our nature is so corrupt, that no good can be done till we are renewed; but when renewed, we obey because we love.

4. In doing good, our dependance must not be thereon, but on the merits of Christ. *After all, say, we are unprofitable servants.* Renounce all, in point of merit, while we abound in the practical part. Phil. viii. 7, 8.

5. To do evil, is habitually to neglect to do good, or else to do it in a languid manner, without principle, wilfully or secretly living in some sin; nay, all in a state of nature may be ranked in this class. Rom. viii. 7, 8.

SERMON LXXIX.

THE SILENT CHRISTIAN.

PSALM XXXIX. 9.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.

1. **I**N this Psalm, a narration and prayer is the whole.
2. A disease discovered and a remedy applied.
3. This text is the cure—be *still* and *quiet*.
1. What doth a holy silence include?
 1. There is a *stoical silence*, thinking it below them to rejoice in any good, or to grieve for any evil—sinful insensibility.
 2. *Political silence*, fearing to be *insnared* either by the *rage* and *fury* of men, or by their *plots* and *designs*—to prevent which they are silent.
 3. *Foolish silence*, neither *do well* nor *speak well*;

some think, by being silent they may be accounted wise, but this is *foolish*.

4. *Sullen silence*, to gratify an humour; some are for indulging a dumb devil, which is the worst of all *aeviles*.

5. There is a *forced silence*, being under the power of an enemy; having taken his liberty he may take his life also.

6. *Despairing silence*, being a terror to himself; he hath hell in his heart and horror in his countenance—look upwards, inwards, or forwards, all seems dark.

7. *Prudent silence*, springing from gracious principles, which is the silence here meant.

It includes,

1. A sight of God as the author of our afflictions; God being the chief mover in all *actions*, is more to be eyed than any subordinate cause whatever, Job i. 21. Lev. x. 3. If God's hand is not *seen* the heart will *fret*.

2. It includes the apprehension of God's majesty, sovereignty, dignity, authority, and *presence*, Zeph. i. 7, *Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord*. Thus Aaron, Job, and others.

3. It includes holy quietness and calmness of mind; this shuts out murmuring, fretting, wrangling, and boilings of heart—silent and still.

4. It takes in an humble, justifying, clearing, and acquitting of God from all blame, rigour, and injustice in our afflictions, Ps. li. 4.

5. It takes in *gracious, blessed, soul-quicken*ing conclusions about the issue and event; as,

1. They shall work for our *good*.

2. They shall purge away our *dross*.

3. The heart is ploughed, and the weeds killed.

4. Become crucified to the world.

5. They may serve to hide pride in man.

6. Carry off *ill-humours*, and increase *experience*.

7. Give me more tenderness and compassion for souls.

6. It includes a strict charge and solemn command, that conscience lays upon the soul to be quiet and still. Ps. xxxvii. 7.

7. It includes a rendering and resigning up of our souls to God, whilst under his hand, Ps. xxvii. 8. James iv. 7. The silent language is, *Lord, here I am, do with me what pleaseth thee.*

8. It includes a patient waiting upon the Lord, till deliverance comes, Ps. xl. 1—3. The husbandman waits for the harvest, and the mariner patiently waits for the wind.

II. What this holy silence doth not exclude.

1. It doth not exclude a sense and feeling of our affliction. God's rebukes make man's beauty consume away.

2. It doth not shut out prayer for deliverance out of our afflictions. I may thank this proud, worldly, forward, formal, dull heart, for all that is come upon me.

3. It doth not exclude the instruction of others. Words from the afflicted stick close. Paul's epistles were many of them written from prison. Good advice to the afflicted is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

4. It doth not exclude moderate mourning under the hand of God, Isa. xxxviii. 3. *Hezekiah wept sore*, and the Lord said, I have heard thy prayer, and seen thy tears, and will add to thy days fifteen years.

5. It doth not shut out lawful means, to be delivered out of our afflictions. If they persecute you in one city flee unto another. While Peter was in prison the people prayed.

6. It does not exclude sober and just complaining against the authors, or the instruments of our afflictions, 2 Tim. iv. 14. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil, the Lord reward him according to his work.

III. Why must Christians be silent under affliction?

1. That they may the better understand the voice of the rod. Has the Spirit and conscience both a voice, so hath the rod.

2. That they may distinguish themselves from the men of the world, who usually fret and murmur under afflictions.

3. That they may be conformable to Christ their

head, who was dumb and silent under his sorest trials, Isa. liii. 7.

4. Because it is a far greater judgment to be given up to fretfulness and murmuring, than it is to be afflicted.

5. Because a prudent silence under miseries doth best capacitate and fit the afflicted for the receipt of mercies.

6. Because it is useless to strive and contend with God. What is got by murmuring must be lost by weeping.

7. By being silent we frustrate Satan's design and expectation. His design in Job was to make him blaspheme.

8. That you may be an example to those about you, thereby encouraging others to tread in the same steps.

Use.

1. Let the consideration of God's sovereignty and majesty move thee to silence.

2. They are all intended to work for your good, both here and hereafter.

3. Silence lends a hand to *faith, hope, and love*, yea, to humility and self-denial.

4. Silence leads us to see we have deserved more than we have received.

5. There is a natural, moral, and artificial quietness; but let us obtain this gracious quietness, that we may be prepared for all events.

The evil and danger of murmuring.

1. As holy silence argues much grace, so murmuring argues much sin, and speaks a heart full of self-love.

2. The Holy Ghost hath set a brand of infamy upon murmurers; he hath stigmatized them for ungodly persons, Jude 15, 16.

3. Murmuring is a mother sin; yea, a sin that breeds many others—disobedience, rebellion, ingratitude, impatience, distrust, cursing, and carnality.

4. Murmuring is a God-provoking sin, and a God-destroying sin too, Num. xxvi. 10, 12. Rev. xvi. 10.

5. Murmuring is the devil's image, sin, and punishment. Satan still murmurs at every mercy God be-

stows, at every dram of grace God gives, at every sin he pardons, and at every soul he saves.

6. Murmuring is a soul-imbittering sin and a mercy-souring sin; it puts every sweet into a sour vessel, yea, it puts gall and wormwood into every cup. Murmurers taste no sweet, feel no comfort, nor take no delight in any mercy he enjoys.

7. Murmuring is a mercy-destroying sin; it cuts their throats, and stabs all our mercies at the heart—it sets all a man's miseries a bleeding about him.

8. Murmuring unfits us for duty. A murmurer can neither hear, read, pray, nor meditate to profit; he can neither do good nor receive good.

9. Murmuring unman's a man; it strips him of his reason and understanding, and makes him call evil good, and good evil; it calls saviours destroyers, and destroyers saviours.

10. Murmuring is a time-destroying sin; hence, while he should be praying he is murmuring—musing how to get out of such and such a trouble.

11. Murmuring makes the life of man miserable; hence it vexes, wears and tears the heart with wounds and stabs.

When is affliction sanctified?

1. When it draws our souls to love God more. When it gives us more courage and patience, and enlivens our hopes.

2. When we become more careful to glorify God; such say, stand by me that I sin not, uphold me that I fall not.

3. Affliction does us good when we enjoy the special presence of God in it.

4. When we become more conformable to Christ in all his virtues, in meekness, humbleness, and heavenly-mindedness.

5. When they bring us more under divine teachings, and lead us nearer to God.

6. When we are willing the plaster should lie on till the cure be wrought. Many want the bitter cup taken away.

7. If your afflictions lead you to live a life of faith, then they are sanctified.

Benefits.

1. The longer afflicted, the more graces are exercised and increased.
2. The longer afflicted, the more his religious comfort shall be multiplied.
3. The longer afflicted, the more Christ's image will be transformed.

Why silent?

1. Thy afflictions are not as many as thy sins; sins are like sand.
2. They are not so many as God might justly have exercised us with.
3. They are not so many as our mercies. What are thy crosses to thy comforts.
4. Not so many as others have had.
5. Not so many as Christ had.
6. Murmuring adds to their number.
7. Not equal to thy joys and pleasures.

SERMON LXXX.

ON GOSPEL ORDINANCES.

JOHN vii. 8.

Go ye up to this feast.

1. **BOTH** the Jewish worship under the law, and the Christian worship under the gospel, is considered under the notion of a feast.

2. And although Jewish feasts are ended, yet we are obliged to have a zealous regard to God's institutions, and to pay him becoming worship.

3. Christ, by his own example, attended on the public worship of his Father in the temple.

1. How may divine worship be compared to a feast?

1. Because they are signs of friendship between God and men. Feasts are designed for friends and relations. God's design in appointing religious worship was, to be a means of beginning a correspondence between him and us.

2. Because of the entertainment he gives his friends in them. The word and sacraments are means of bringing us into a league of amity and peace with the offended Creator. By these means he fills the hungry souls, increases their faith and love, and mortifies their earthly affections.

3. Sometimes good men come to the ordinances dark and full of doubts and fears—their hearts hard and their temptations strong; and, while in the use of them, all darkness is dispelled, and their doubts and fears taken away.

II. The obligations we are under to attend them.

1. The command of God obliges us to it, and disobedience constitutes us sinners; and none can be saved who habitually breaks them.

2. The dignity of the person who obliges us to comply with this command. Though he was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, yet he has a nature, and in respect of which he stiles himself the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace.

3. To celebrate the memorials of Christ's death was his dying command, and therefore all are obliged to comply with it, who expect salvation by virtue of his death and mediation.

4. From what he has done for us; yea, it was for our sakes he veiled his glory, and submitted to all his sufferings. He knew by experience the meaning of weariness, pain, hunger, and thirst. It was for our sakes he became poor.

5. It renders the obligations more strong, and the neglect of it more inexcusable, because it is easy. All his commands are both easy and reasonable. He does not call us on long pilgrimages.

6. Our own immortal interests oblige us to comply with, or to observe every instituted means of worship,

and especially his dying command : all his laws promote our felicity.

7. The example of good men, when agreeable to the word, has the force of a law, and therefore we are commanded to imitate them, who by faith and patience inherit the promises.

III. The dispositions with which we should attend on divine ordinances.

1. We should worship with holy fear, yea, with awe and reverence on our spirits, having believing and suitable impressions of him on our souls.

2. We should worship and approach God, by faith in his Son ; this is so often inculcated, that we are told, without it we cannot please God.

3. We should worship God with warm affections. His calling us to this feast of worship is an evidence that he is willing to be our reconciled Father.

4. We should approach him with believing and enlarged expectations. *Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.*

5. With pungent grief and sorrow for our sin. God himself is represented as paying particular regard to such sacrifices as these.

6. With strong resolutions, through divine grace, to abandon all sin, and devote ourselves to his service in future. God says, *he will speak peace to his people, but let them not return again to folly.*

SERMON LXXXI.

ON GOSPEL PREACHING.

I TIM. iv. 16.

Take heed to thyself and thy doctrine.

TO study books makes the scholar—to study men makes the statesman—to study times makes the politician—to study conscience makes the christian.

I. *A Minister's doctrines.*

1. A Minister must be careful that his doctrine be *sound*. He must give such food to Christ's little ones as is wholesome and uncorrupt—the *sincere milk of the word*. He must *hold fast the form of sound words*, and preach *the truth according to godliness*. He should not teach any other doctrine than what he hath good warrant for from the Holy Scriptures. He ought, with St. Paul, to *preach the kingdom of God, and to teach those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ*. The people should hear *words whereby they may be saved*. We have a caution not to add our dreams to God's word, nor to mix the chaff of our fancies with divine truths. *The Prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully: What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.*

2. A Minister's doctrine should be *plain and clear*, suited to the capacities of his hearers. As the design of a Minister should be to inform the mind and move the heart, so he should get right notions, and speak clearly and naturally. Confused notions beget cloudy expressions; and flights of wit, refined thoughts, accurate definitions, delivered in logical terms, are more likely to amuse than to edify. This may lead the people to think us learned, but not to make them holy. To dwell long upon explaining words and phrases, in which there is no difficulty—to hunt after criticisms,

and make a great ado about the originals—to summon a jury of Expositors to decide the meaning of what every body knows—to insist much upon the least circumstance of a text—to divide plain texts in terms of art, is looked upon as mere trifling, and nothing but a solemn piece of impertinence. He who preaches to a country, unlearned auditory, if he affect loftiness or polite language, is like to be a barbarian to most of his hearers. Metaphysical subtleties, and uncommon words of Latin or Greek derivation, though put in an English dress, are mere Arabic to the common people. It is good for a Minister to put himself into the place of the most ignorant and unlearned in his congregation, and to endeavour to speak solid truth, with as little shew of art as possible.

That our discourses may be instructive and edifying, our stile should neither be laboured and stiff, nor yet careless and slovenly. We should utter words easy to be understood, such as are suitable to the simplicity and majesty of divine truths, and such as are suited to convey our notions into the minds of the hearers.

Bishop Burnet saith, “The end of preaching is, to make some portions of Scripture to be rightly understood; to make those truths contained in them to be more fully apprehended; and then to lay the matter home to the consciences of the hearers, so directing all to some good and practical end. In the choice of texts, care should be taken not to choose those that seem to have humour in them, or that must be long wrought upon before they are understood. Plain texts should be chosen for common auditories. Many will remember the text, though nothing else; therefore, such a choice should be made as may, at least, put a weighty and speaking sense of the Scriptures upon the memories of the people. A sermon should be made for a text, and not a text found out for a sermon. Neither should texts be squeezed to force out of them what is not clearly contained in them. Those who pretend to find something new and strange in every plain text, will not shew so much their parts as their pride and wantonness of wit.”

3. A Minister's doctrine should be *seasonable*, and *suited* to the *wants* and *necessities* of his hearers. He should *study to speak a word in season to him that is weary*. He must beware lest he grow brain-sick, and so *dote about questions and strifes of words*. He should shun profane dotages, vanities, or empty sounds—heathenish, empty discourses of theology, brought in by the heretics. He should not put off his hearers with empty notions, dry and barren speculations. This is to give them stones instead of bread. It is not enough that he sow no tares in Christ's field; he must not fill his floor with chaff. They behave unlike Christ's Ministers, who affect to make people stare at their high-flown and bombast language; or to please their fancies with foolish jingles and pedantic and boyish wit; or to be admired for their ability in dividing a hair, their metaphysical acuteness and scholastic subtlety; or for their doughty dexterity in controversial squabble.

4. A Minister's doctrine should be *searching*, and reach the consciences of his hearers; he should be particular and close in his applications, as well as sound and clear in his explications. He that thoroughly understands his matter, and hath his heart duly affected with it, will deliver it with that vehemency and ardour, that the hearers may almost feel that he speaks from the heart. That preaching which makes the hearers look pleased, or tends to set them on talking or laughing one upon the other, is likely to do little good to their souls; but such discourses as make every one go away grave and silent, hastening to be alone for secret prayer and meditation, best answers the end of preaching.

Great prudence and faithfulness are required in re-proving the faults of our people, that sin may be disgraced and the sinner not exposed. He that uses personal reflections, or carries his private resentments with him into the pulpit, will turn his sermons into libels, and exasperate, but not reform. A guilty conscience is a tender thing, and will quickly take a hint.

Our discourses should not be spent in general and indefinite things, as in exhortations to the people to

get Christ, to be united to Christ, or the like; but these great and important things should be particularly explained. General matters and metaphors not explained, do but fill people's heads with empty notions, and their mouths with empty talk, while their hearts remain empty, and their lives barren.

It is not good to affect prolixity. Short sermons are best heard; and best remembered. Better leave off with affection, than proceed with flatness and dulness. It is good for our hearers to rise with an appetite. The dispensation of the word should be *quick* and *powerful*. Though much noise and action are nauseous and ridiculous to the judicious, where solid matter and perspicuity are wanting, yet earnestness of speech and elevation of voice are of no small force with vulgar hearers, who, being the greatest number in most auditories, deserve to be chiefly regarded by us. The weight of our message, the dulness or drowsiness of our hearers, require us to be lively and fervent. Shall we speak of the great concerns of eternity without feeling? Shall we expostulate with poor sinners, who are just ready to leap into everlasting burnings, as if we were half asleep? We ought to seek out such words as may be as *goads* and as *nails*, such as may pierce deep, and reach home; such as may rouse the drowsy, and wound the hearts of the careless sinners.

Let us also take some pains with our hearts before we enter upon our public work. If we ourselves be dead and cold, it is not likely that we should warm and quicken others. Let us, therefore, by meditation and prayer, endeavour to get fire from heaven to kindle our sacrifice, that it may be a sweet savour unto God.

5. A Minister ought to *preach* to *himself*, and to work his sermons upon his own heart. "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself." The experimental preacher is most fitted to do it to souls. *That which comes from the heart, is aptest to go to the heart.* It is much easier to preach many sermons to others, than one to ourselves—to reprove many sins in others, than one in ourselves—to reprove many sins in others, than to mortify one in ourselves. If we do not

believe, and feel what we study and preach to others, we are some of the worst of hypocrites. We ought to join much prayer and meditation with our studies. Hard study qualifies us to instruct others. Prayer and meditation, with diligent examination of ourselves, is the way to bring our sermons home to our own souls. He that is most constant and earnest in his addresses to the throne of grace in private, is best prepared to feel himself, and to make others also feel what he delivers in the pulpit. Let us get our own hearts affected with the evil of sin, and warmed with the love of Christ, if we desire to be successful preachers of faith and repentance.

Lastly, That Minister who would both save himself and those that hear him, ought to continue in a diligent care of himself, and of his doctrine. He must persevere in the faithful discharge of his duty. Having set his hand to the plough, he must not look back. He must not cast off his office, nor grow weary of the work, *knowing that in due time he shall reap, if he faint not.*

We have acted very impolitically, if we have taken the ministry upon us upon worldly considerations. We are quite out of the road to honour and preferment, and know that we were so, when we devoted ourselves to the service of the church of Christ. Let us beware lest any worldly considerations make us quit our function. Let none of us violate our solemn ordination vows, and wound our consciences, to better our circumstances in the world. Let us hold fast those principles which, upon a diligent and impartial inquiry, we find to be sound and good, and go on cheerfully in our duty, expecting our reward from Christ at his glorious appearing.

II. *Cautions to Ministers.*

1. A Minister should *take heed and beware of covetousness.* He should watch against a sordid worldly spirit. Nothing can make a Minister more cheap and mean than a stingy, niggardly humour. Some people, through ignorance, despise pious, learned Ministers for their poverty, though they deserve to be highly honoured and esteemed. But all despise miserable

earth-worms, who idolize the world, while they exhort others to condemn it.

2. A Minister should take heed of *flattery* and *dissimulation*. He should watch against a low servile spirit. He should not think much to stoop and condescend to the meanest for their good; and yet he should scorn to creep and truckle to the humours of the greatest. He must not be blear-eyed in conniving at, nor meal-mouthed in reproving the faults of those whose souls he is to watch over. He must not soothe people in their sins, in hopes of worldly advantage. It ill becomes an ambassador of Jesus Christ to bow the knee to a golden image. Too many among us think that they are our masters, and would fain use us accordingly; but one is our master, even Christ. From him we derive our authority, and from him we expect our reward. He hath made us stewards in his house, and rulers over it. Let us, therefore, approve ourselves to him as his Ministers, and not become *men-pleasers*. Let us keep our station, and hold fast the power with which Christ hath invested us, and not suffer our people to be our masters and rulers. If we give way to an aspiring spirit, we shall quickly become mere ciphers. If we have to do with such as do not know how to keep their place, let them see that we will not quit ours, nor deliver up the keys to them as our rulers, who are to be ruled by us.

3. A Minister should take heed of *pride* and *unruly passion*. He should watch against a haughty and hasty spirit. Though he is to rule Christ's flock by Christ's laws, yet he must not *lord it over God's heritage*. He should be clothed with humility, and should beware lest his knowledge puff him up. If he have gotten esteem and reputation by his learning and useful labours, he should let it be nursed abroad, and not fetch it home to look upon it. His face like Moses's should shine to others, but he should not make looking-glasses for himself. If at any time his heart be tickled or transported with the praises and applause of his admirers, he should check this vanity by such reflections as these—Although I am cried up, and followed by men, yet, if I be lifted up with pride, I shall miss of

Christ's commendations at the last day. And how awful would it be if, after all the praise of men, I should be covered with shame and everlasting contempt, for not giving the glory to God.

4. A Minister should watch against *rash anger* and impatience. Patience enlarges the mind and procures esteem ; but a pettish temper is a sign of a little, impotent spirit. The weaker any one, the fuller he is of complaints. How little did Jonah make himself by his passion for the gourd ! Some think to command respect by strutting and swelling, by keeping others at a great distance from them, by talking big and looking high, by seeking for occasions to look on themselves as slighted or affronted. But such, instead of being esteemed and honoured, are commonly hated or scorned. A servant of pride or anger, will soon become cheap and useless ; and that Minister, whose mind is swoln with pride, or ulcerated with passion, will find that those distempers will render his life bitter to himself, and his labours, in a great measure, unprofitable to others.

5. A Minister should take heed of an *uncharitable and censorious temper*. He should watch against a narrow spirit, and not judge of persons or things by little measures, nor shew a great deal of zeal for little things. He ought not to hunt after applause, nor make himself popular by being singular. He should beware of running into extremes, or leading others to place much of their religion in their separation from, or in their zeal against the errors and faults of others. *His moderation should be known to all.*

III. *The virtues of Ministers.*

1. A Minister's behaviour and conversation should be adorned with *simplicity and godly sincerity*. He should not walk in *craftiness*, but be fair and ingenuous, free and open-hearted. He should abhor tricking, and abstain from little devices and insinuations, to carry on any petty interest or design. He should remember, that a man of *intrigues*, a *cunning* or *shrewd man*, is but a mere genteel name for a knave. Locke, on Education, saith, "Cunning is the ape of wisdom, but is most distant from it. A cunning trick helps but

once, but hinders ever after. No cover was ever made so big, so fine as to hide itself. Nobody was ever yet so *cunning* as to conceal his being so : and when they are once discovered, every body is shy, every body is distrustful of *crafty* men, and all the world forwardly join to oppose and defeat them ; whilst the open, fair, wise man, has every body to make way for him, and goes directly towards his end."

2. A Minister's carriage should be *courteous* and *affable*, *kind* and *obliging*, not austere and *morose*. This is the way to get people's love ; and he that gets an interest in the affections of his hearers, hath a great advantage in order to the doing good to their souls.

3. A Minister should study to be *pleasant* and *cheerful*, but withal *grave* and *serious*. A sour, morose deportment is burthensome, and an affected gravity ridiculous. An airy spirit and carriage, though it pass for good humour, yet it borders too nearly upon froth and vanity. He that takes too much liberty in vain jests, and idle stories, deserves to be branded for a *trifler* ; but a *grave* cheerfulness will render our conversation desirable, lively, and agreeable.

4. A Minister should be *quiet* and *peaceable*, of a healing spirit. *The servant of the Lord must not strive*, but follow those which make for peace. Railing sounds very ill out of the mouths of the Ministers of Christ, whether in or out of the pulpit.

5. Ministers should avoid *differences*, being more inclined to compose than to foment men. To be ready to hold a fair correspondence, and, if we can, to keep up familiarity and intimacy with pious and learned men, of different sentiments from us, in some lesser things. Ministers, above all men, should, if possible, live peaceably with all men. Therefore, if we desire to promote the common salvation, it is our duty to do what we can to uphold the reputation of the public ministry, and to maintain a hearty affection for all the friends of God and godliness. We ought ourselves to honour both the persons, and also the labours of the pious and learned of every church, although they may not be persuaded to speak or think well of us ; yea, we ought to strengthen their hands in God, and rejoice

in the success of their labours, who sincerely endeavour to promote the conversion and edification of souls.

6. Let us do what we can to form in our hearers a truly catholic spirit ; let us wholly apply ourselves to the duties of our calling, and see that our conversation be strict and exemplary ; let us so behave ourselves, that it may appear we are carrying on no other design than to make people wise and good ; and not to draw them to, or fix them in any party. This is the way to convince those who brand us as schismatics, shewing that it is conscience and a fear of offending God, not humour or faction, which obliges us to hold fast our profession. By such a moderate healing spirit as this, we shall approve ourselves to God and those who are eminently wise and good, and then we shall need not much regard the censures of others.



SERMON LXXXII.

ON EARTHLY-MINDEDNESS.

PHIL. iii. 19.

Who mind earthly things.

I. **W**HO do mind earthly things ?

1. Not all who enjoy them, but all who look on them as the greatest things ; as, if I had such things, how happy should I be !

2. When our chief thoughts are busied about earthly things : thoughts shew the man.

3. An earthly mind cleaves to earthly things, savouring the things of earth only.

4. An earthly mind is filled with distracting cares about the earth—what he shall eat, drink, and wear, and how he shall provide for himself and his family.

5. Earthly-mindedness eagerly and greedily work

with strong intention about these things, giving the whole bent of the soul that way.

6. Earthly-minded men follow their calling, because they see some gain by it ; this shews they love it.

7. The very ends of carnal men are earthly, as the frame of their hearts are but earthly, even in spiritual performances.

8. Earthly men pass through great difficulties in matters of the earth, and they are little to them.

9. Earthly-minded men conceive of spiritual things in an earthly way, according to their genius and disposition.

II. The great evil of earthly-mindedness.

1. It is called spiritual *adultery*, Jude 4. This may be in heart, though not in act.

2. It is called idolatry, Ephes. v. 5. Covetousness is called idolatry. Men are idolators that have an earthly mind. It slights and departs from God.

3. An earthly mind is enmity against God. It is living after the flesh.

4. Earthly-mindedness is contrary to the nature of grace, and will turn men out of the good way.

5. Earthly-mindedness exposes men to great temptations, because they that will be rich fall into a snare ; they must have them upon any terms.

6. It is one of the greatest hindrances to the success of the ministry, as such being a heart full of dross, and then no marvel they are not edified.

7. Earthly-mindedness causes many foolish and hurtful lusts in the heart ; lusts that are very foolish, sinful, and simple, as it causes men to follow what is vile and mean—it causes men to be a servant of servants—it makes you pay dear for it—it must be undone ; yea, by it they lose the comfort before they have it.

8. It is the root of *apostacy*, 2 Tim. iv. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present evil world.* Demas and Luke were great associates, and Paul quits them both.

9. It greatly deadens the heart in prayer ; it sinks their spirits, and deadens their affections.

10. An earthly-minded man hath the curse of the serpent upon him, viz. *Upon thy belly shalt thou go,*

and dust shalt thou lick. Thy soul cleaves to the dust in a sinful way.

11. It is a dishonour to God, and a scandal to religion.

12. It greatly hinders a preparation for death; yea, it makes death quite terrible.

13. It will bring destruction at last, and drown the soul in perdition—*whose end is destruction.*

III. How far may men go in religion, and yet be earthly-minded?

1. They may have their judgments convinced, and their passions alarmed.

2. They may yet rest in that state without getting delivered out of it.

3. They may speak great words about worldly vanity, and yet cleave to it.

4. They may be free from getting earthly riches by false ways.

5. They may seem to despise some earthly things, while yet they cleave to others.



SERMON LXXXIII.

ST. PAUL'S FAREWELL SERMON.

ACTS XX. 27.

I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.

I. **H**IS last practical pathetic discourse.

1. He appeals to them concerning his life and doctrine, during all the time he had been at Ephesus, verse 8.

2. His spirit and conversation were excellent and exemplary, yea, and uncorrupt. He had lived holily, justly, and unblamably.

3. He had made it his business to serve the Lord, to promote his interest and kingdom among them.

4. His very manner of entering in among them was such as nobody could find fault with.

5. He had done his work with all humility of mind, viz. with all condescension, modesty, and self-abasement.

6. He had been very tender, affectionate, and compassionate; and had served the Lord with many tears. Like Christ, in his prayers, *he wept and made supplication*.

7. He had struggled with many difficulties among them; he went through much opposition, and many temptations, Jer. xx. 8, 9.

II. St. Paul's manner of preaching.

1. It was *plain*, so as to be readily understood. *I have shewed you, and have taught you*. He did not amuse, but shewed them plain truths.

2. It was *powerful*, as one upon *oath*, as being himself fully assured of the truth of what he preached, and earnestly desirous to convince, influence, and govern them by what he said.

3. It was *profitable*, since he always aimed at doing good to those he preached to. He studied what would make them wise and good.

4. He was a *faithful* preacher, keeping back nothing that would do them good. He did not keep back the cross, nor even reproofs when they were necessary.

5. His preaching was evangelical; he meddled not with politics, but preached repentance and faith, the two great gospel duties. Their nature and necessity he urged on all occasions.

6. He was a catholic preacher, testifying both to Jews and Greeks that Christ would receive all. Christ is no respecter of persons.

7. He was a laborious preacher, viz. very industrious and indefatigable in his work. He preached publicly, and from house to house.

III. The great end he had in view.

1. That he might be found faithful to the trust reposed in him, and finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus.

2. That he might finish his course well ; he minds not whether he finishes soon, or sudden, or sad, so that he might but finish his work well.

3. That he might get safe to heaven, and obtain a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give to all them that love his appearing.

SERMON LXXXIV.

THE JUDGMENT-DAY.

ACTS xvii. 31.

He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.

1. **T**HESE words were the conclusion of St. Paul's defence before the famous court of Areopagus, in the learned and philosophical city of Athens.

2. In this august assembly he speaks with boldness, and in the strain of an evangelical apostle.

3. He first inculcates on them the truths of natural religion, and labours to reform them from idolatry and superstition, into which the city was sunk.

4. He closes this discourse by introducing the peculiarities of the christian religion, the great duties of repentance, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment.

5. In these dark times of ignorance which preceded the gospel, God seemed to wink at the idolatry and wickedness that had overspread the world, and so overlooking as either not to punish them, or to give them explicit calls to repentance.

6. But now the gospel is published through the

world, God no longer connives at the impenitence of mankind, but publishes his great mandate explicitly and loudly, commanding all men every where to repent, giving particular motives and encouragements to the duty. The principal motive which should have the greatest weight, is that in the text.

I. The day of judgment.

1. As to the person of the judge, Christ tells us, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*, John v. 22—27.

2. As to the manner of his appearance, it will be such as becomes the dignity of his person and office. He will shine in all the glories of the Godhead, as well as in all the glories of the manhood.

3. His attendants will add a dignity to the grand appearance, and increase the solemnity and terror of the day. *The Son of Man shall come in his own glory, and in the glory of the Father*, Matt. xxv. 31. *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire*, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

4. Also all the saints who have left the world from Adam to this day; *for those that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him*, 1 Thess. iv. 14. Daniel's imagery is applicable and suitable to this day, ix. 10, *And I beheld till the thrones were cast down*. Or St. John's description of him, Rev. i. 13.

II. The parties to be judged.

1. Where are they? In their dusty beds, except the then present generation, who shall be all roused from their long sleep of thousands of years! *The trumpet shall sound, and the Lord shall descend*.

2. Now all the millions of mankind of whatever country or nation, whether they expect it or not; all will feel the shock instantaneously in every limb, and the pulse immediately begin to beat.

3. Now see graves opening, tombs bursting, the earth heaving, and all alive, while those subterranean armies are bursting their way through. See clouds of human dust and broken bones darkening the air! Whole armies springing to life where they once lost their lives, in fields fattened with their blood, produced a thousand harvests.

4. See a succession of thousands of years rising in clouds from grave-yards round the places where they once attended, in order to prepare for their decisive day.

5. How will the living be surprised to find men starting into life under their feet ; some heaving the ground, and others half risen, or standing upright before them.

6. What vast multitudes had slept in watry graves, now emerge from the rivers and seas, and oceans, and throw them into tumult.

7. Now will appear the Goliahs, the Anakims, and the other giants of ancient times ; yea, the millions of infants, starting up at once, perhaps in full maturity, or perhaps in the lowest class of mankind. *The dead, small and great, shall stand before God,* Rev. xx. 12, 15.

III. The character and doom of mankind.

1. Their bodies will all be improved, and made vigorous, capacious, and immortal. But here lies the difference : the righteous will be strengthened to bear the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory ; but those of the wicked will be strengthened to sustain an heavier load of misery ; a capacity capable of pain.

2. The immortality of the righteous will be the duration of their happiness. Their bodies will shine as the sun, stars, and firmament ; but those of the wicked will be grim, shocking, ugly and hateful as hell.

3. The bodies of saints will be fit mansions for their heavenly spirits to inhabit, and every feature speak the happiness within ; but the bodies of the wicked will be clothed with despair, malice, rage, and all infernal passions : nothing but shapes of deformity and terror.

4. How joyfully will the souls of the righteous return to their old habitations, in which they once served their God with honest, though feeble endeavours. But with what reluctance will the wicked spirits unite to their old bodies, to be tormented together for ever.

IV. The universal convocation.

1. The place of judgment will be the region of the air, being capacious for such a multitude. Here also will be the place of judicature; and perhaps the rays of light and majestic darkness may be so blended as to form the appearance of a cloud to the view of the gazing world.

2. They will be gathered by the angels, the officers of this grand court. They will also drag the wicked away to judgment and execution, and separate them from the righteous.

3. The fallen angels also make their appearance at the bar. This they have long expected with horror, as the period when their consummate misery will be complete.

4. At the Judge's order, they all divide according to their characters, to the right and left, Matt. xxv. 32, 33. What a strange separation, and how many will then part, that have been companions here below! How many desponding souls will then be safe for ever!

5. There see the unbelieving, the impenitent, the lukewarm, and the various classes of hypocrites, and half, or almost christians.

6. Happy they who have mourned for sin, accepted salvation, been made new creatures, and have persevered safely to the end.

7. What strange discoveries will then be made—what affectionate aspirations—what devout exercises of heart, which will lay open in full light, and receive the approbation of the supreme Judge!

8. What works of shame and darkness, dishonesty, secret treachery, hypocrisy, lewdness, and various forms of wickedness! And all this to the confusion of the guilty, and the astonishment of the whole universe.

V. The rule by which they shall be tried.

1. Now, the light of reason, the law of nature, or that of conscience, is an universal rule, and universally known, or at least knowable by all the sons of men; Heathens, Mahometans, as well as Jews and Christians. This the consciences of all now forebode.

When the Gentiles which have not the law, &c. By this rule their consciences now acquit or condemn. The Heathens will be judged by this only.

2. But where revelation is enjoyed, whether by tradition, the laws of Moses, or in the clearer dispensations of the gospel with the christian world, they shall be judged by this revealed law; and by how much the more perfect the rule, by so much the more strict will their account be.

3. Ignorance is no sufficient excuse, where there has been opportunities of knowing better. Christ said, *it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah*, than for those places that had enjoyed the advantages of his ministry.

4. In courts, law books are referred to, opened and read, for the direction of the judges, and sentence is passed according to them. In allusion to which Daniel said, *I saw the judgment set, and the books opened.* Dan. vii. 10. Matt. xx. 12.

5. The scriptures lead us to conceive there will be witnesses to prove the facts. The omniscient Judge will witness against the guilty.

6. Angels, who were ministering spirits, will be witnesses; yea, devils too, who once tempted, will now become accusers. In short, the scripture represents inanimate nature as speaking: stones, dust, and even the timber in the wall, shall witness against the sinner.

VI. The sentence.

1. Heaven and earth are all silent and attentive, while the Judge with smiles in his face, and a voice sweeter than heavenly music, turns to the glorious company on his right hand, and pours all the joys of heaven into their souls with the transporting sentence, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, &c.* Every word is full of emphasis, of heaven, and exactly agreeable to the desires of those to whom it is addressed. They desired nothing so much as his blessing—they feared nothing so much as his curse; and now their fears are removed, and their desires fully accomplished. *Happy believers!*

2. But hark ! another sentence breaks and proceeds from the mouth of the Judge, like vengeful thunder. Nature gives a deep groan, and the heavens shudder and gather blackness ! The earth trembles, and guilty millions sink with horror at the sound !

3. Now the grand period is arrived in which the final state of mankind is unchangeably settled. From this important era, their happiness or misery runs on in one uniform, uninterrupted tenor ; no change, no gradation ; but from glory to glory in the seal of perfection, or from grief to grief in the region of eternal darkness !

4. Time was ; but is no more ! All now enter upon a duration not to be measured by the revolution of the sun, moon, days, months, or years. Now eternity dawns—a day that shall never see an evening !

5. Heaven pours upon them from above the horrors of hell, spread far and wide ; and conscience preys upon their hearts, and that for ever : *there the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched !*

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EVILS TO BE AVOIDED
IN
PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

AS preaching the gospel is the principal mean which God has appointed for the conversion of sinners and edification of saints, it must be one of the most important things in the world. If a preacher properly considers, that he must be to his hearers, either a “savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death,” he will feel himself placed in a situation both interesting and awful beyond description. The general, upon whose military skill and valour the lives of thousands depend, occupies a station comparatively insignificant to that of a minister, whose errors afflict the souls and immortal interests of his congregation. It is true, he cannot command a blessing on his people, because God bestows that when and where he pleases; yet, as God addresses men as reasonable creatures, it is a minister’s duty to bestow as much pains on his sermon, as if the success of them depended entirely on himself.

The grand design of preaching is to display the glory of God, through his Son Jesus Christ, thereby to convert sinners to himself. Ministers, therefore, are not to preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, viz. they are not to preach in such a strain as shall attract the notice and admiration of the congregation to themselves; but endeavour so thoroughly to engage the hearts of their hearers with God, that, if possible, they shall absolutely overlook the persons who speak to them, and think of nothing but the grand subject of

redemption. They should hold the picture which God has painted of himself in the gospel, in such a position, as shall shew it to the greatest advantage, and entirely conceal themselves from view behind : Towards obtaining which desirable end, the few following remarks may, it is hoped, have their use :

1. Some ministers, of whom we have heard, have been fond of preaching from odd texts, such as, " Put on the great pot," or " Two legs and a piece of an ear." This is a paltry bait for popularity. Indeed, the people may listen attentively to hear what can be said from such unmeaning words, yet they cannot listen with that holy reverence which a religious exercise demands ; the bare reading of the text discomposes their gravity, and banishes seriousness from their minds.

2. A few others, of a worse stamp, endeavour to make themselves of importance, by trying to fetch out of a text what never was in it. They twist and distort their text till not a vestige of the word of God remains. One of this description some time ago, preached from these words, " An instrument of ten strings ;" on which he played for an hour and three-quarters. He insisted that the instrument was man, and the ten strings were the five senses of his body and the five faculties of his soul ; and entertained his auditory for some time with a dissertation on smelling and tasting. About two years ago an old woman, on whose face sat the vacant stare of ignorant amazement, told me she had heard such a nice man ! she did not believe there was such another in the world ! he had opened the Scripture in such a wonderful manner, that he had shewn her things she never saw before ! I asked her what they were ? She said he had told her the meaning of Leah's sore eyes—that they typified the blindness of the Jews, who could not see clearly, and therefore rejected Christ. Really such men ought not to be called preachers of the gospel, but *spiritual mountebanks*.

3. The worst and most mischievous consequence of this mode of preaching is, it goes a great way towards destroying real holiness of heart and life, by reducing christianity to a mere theory and speculation. When

they take up a moral precept, instead of considering its design to regulate the life, they disdainfully overlook its obvious and natural meaning, as being legal, and hunt about for a spiritual one, which is far-fetched and worth nothing.

4. There is also in many hearers a restless curiosity, which is always hankering after marvellous ; they listen with cold indifference to truths which are plain and intelligible, and greedily swallow the most preposterous absurdities. It is beneath the dignity of a minister of Jesus Christ to season his discourses to the vitiated taste and palates of ignorant and unstable, not to say suspicious, professors. It is the easiest thing in the world thus to spiritualize (as they call it) a passage of Scripture ; or to wiredraw a metaphor, but little ingenuity is required ; and as for profound thought and extensive learning, they are quite unnecessary. What a pity, and how much it is to be lamented, that any such preachers should thus pervert the word of God, or that in so doing, they should obtain a patient hearing.

EXCELLENCIES TO BE SOUGHT AFTER
IN
PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

1. **A** Minister should choose for his text some passage of Scripture, containing some important truth, and give the meaning of it faithfully. In so doing he opens the Scriptures, and declares the mind of God to his congregation. He may ascertain the meaning of his text, (1.) By examining it separately from the context. (2.) In connection with the context; and (3.) By comparing it with parallel passages, and the general tenor of holy writ. His divisions should be natural, perspicuous, and few. The grand idea of the text should be preserved whole and entire, not split into fractions. The sun gives more light than a thousand twinkling stars. He should address himself both to the understanding and passions of his hearers. Some sermons resemble lead in being solid and weighty, yet lifeless, cold, and dull. Others may resemble a gorgeous cloud, which surround the setting sun on a summer's evening, adorned with the most brilliant and lively diversified tints, yet empty and unsubstantial—they glittered for a moment and then vanished; or, changing the metaphor, the former may be compared to a large joint of excellent meat spoiled in cooking; the latter to a dish of trifle, which the dainty, over-charged epicure may feed on, but on which a hungry man will starve.

2. Neither long chains of argument, nor lofty flights of eloquence become the pulpit. The generality of hearers have not a capacity to understand the one, nor

taste to admire the other. There may be a few literary persons in a congregation, but the bulk of a congregation is always of a different description ; they are used to labour, not to think ; and their minds are feeble, because inactive. Short sentences and familiar expressions suit them best, and they are greatly pleased and edified by metaphors drawn from their trades, or things with which they are conversant. By familiar, I do not mean vulgar ones ; they are perfectly distinct, though often confounded. I would recommend " him who spake as never man spake," who at once convinced the understanding and touched the finest feelings of the heart. We cannot keep pace with him, yet it is noble to follow him, though afar off. I would suggest to young ministers the superior advantages that will result from copying after the great Head of the Church, rather than the popular preachers of the day. Every man ought to be an original. An original may soar—copyists generally creep. Originality does not require a man to follow his own fancies, in defiance of all rule and decorum, it only directs him to call no man master excepting Christ, and forbids him to be a servile imitator of a fellow worm.

3. A minister should select the most stupid, illiterate person in his congregation, and preach particularly to him. If that person understand him, everybody else will.

4. The proper stile for the pulpit is very different from that which becomes the senate or the bar. The sublime and beautiful orations of a Burke, and the elegant and ingenious harangues of an Erskine, adorn the places where they are delivered. The senator addresses a classic auditory, and may embellish his thoughts with all the copiousness of language and imagery of rhetoric ; the counsellor endeavours to persuade the jury that his cause is a good one, and therefore pleads in a stile calculated to elucidate or perplex the subject, to lead them to or from the point in debate, as shall best serve his purpose. The plain, yet energetic, stile of a Whitefield better becomes the pulpit.

5. To combine plainness with elegant neatness is extremely difficult, much more so than to use lofty and

flowing language, yet it is highly desirable that the illiterate may understand, and the refined not be offended. When a preacher has attained it, he has reached the *ne plus ultra* of his art, and is formed for the most extensive usefulness.

6. But there is another consideration of more importance than any of the foregoing, viz. That if the style and delivery of a sermon be displeasing to God, though the matter it contains may be unexceptionable, nay excellent, God may withhold the blessing, and thereby defeat the end of the preacher's labours; and, in fact, we find that pulpit orators are seldom very useful to saints or sinners. Their auditors are numerous and genteel, yet not the most pious. God pours contempt on literary pride. St. Paul did not attack the Corinthians with the heavy artillery of logic and rhetoric, though no man was better qualified, especially for the former. He addresses them neither as a philosopher nor an orator. He told them a plain undorned tale, in language sublimely simple, that Christ died for sinners, and exhorted them to believe and repent; and God owned him for his ambassador, for he preached to them "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

7. If a minister feels as he ought, he will be extremely grieved at the encomiums which are passed on his sermons. People who receive considerable benefit under a sermon, are too much engaged with God to think about the preacher. If they are deeply bemoaning their sinfulness, or contemplating the glory and grace of the Redeemer with holy gratitude and amazement, they cannot find time to pay compliments to a man like themselves.

8. A preacher's usefulness is to be measured by the benefit which people reap from his ministry; and, if his heart be in the work, I firmly believe that God will give him souls for his hire.

REQUISITES FOR PREACHING.

1. **L**ET the introduction to the text be brief and perspicuous, drawn from the text itself, or the context, or some parallel Scripture.

2. If the text be long, as in histories or parables, let him give a brief sum of it; if short, a paraphrase thereof, if necessary; in both looking diligently to the scope of the text, and pointing at the chief heads to be raised from it.

3. In analysing and dividing his text, he is to regard more the matter than the manner, neither burthening the memory with too many divisions, nor troubling them with obscure terms of art.

4. In raising doctrines, let the matter be the truth of God, contained in and grounded on that text, that the hearers may discern how God teacheth it from hence.

5. Let doctrines be expressed plainly; if explanation be necessary, do it clearly, and quote a few plain pertinent Scriptures in proof of the point.

6. Do not rest in general doctrines, although never so much cleared and confirmed, but to bring it home to special use, by application to his hearers. This requires much prudence, zeal, and faithfulness.

How performed?

1. Diligently and painfully, not doing the work of the Lord negligently.

2. Clearly and plainly, that the meanest may understand; delivering the truth, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

3. Faithfully and affectionately ; looking at the honour of Christ, the conversion, edification, and salvation of the people ; not at his own gain or glory, keeping nothing back which may promote those holy ends, giving to every one his portion, and bearing indifferent respect to all, without neglecting the meanest, or sparing the greatest in their sins.

4. Wisely ; framing his doctrines, exhortations, and reproofs in such a manner, as may be most likely to prevail, shewing all due respect to each man's person and place, and not mixing these with his own passion or bitterness.

5. Gravely, as becometh the word of God, avoiding such gestures and expressions as may occasion others to despise him and his ministry.

6. With loving affection, that the people may see all come from a zealous hearty desire to do them good ; and, lastly,

7. As taught of God, and fully persuaded, that all that he teaches is the word of God ; and so walking before his flock as to be an example to them both in public and private, recommending all his labours to the blessing of God, that he may have many seals to his ministry.

REQUISITES FOR AN ORATOR.

ORATORS should begin with the study of mankind in general, getting knowledge of their genius and manners ; as such, they ought first to know the nature of man, his chief end, and his true interest ; the parts of which he is composed, his mind and his body, and the true way to make him happy. They ought also to understand his passions, the disorders to which they are subject, and the art of governing them ; how they may be usefully raised, and employed on what is truly good ; and, in fine, the proper rules to make him live in peace, and become truly sociable. After this general study, comes that which is particular. Orators should also know the laws and customs of their country, and how far they are agreeable to the genius and temper of the people ; what are the manners of the several relations and conditions among them ; their different way of education ; the common prejudices, and separate interests that prevail in the present age ; and what is the most proper way to instruct and reform the people. This knowledge comprehends all the solid parts of philosophy and politics ; hence Plato says, “ None but a philosopher can be a true orator.”

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG STUDENTS.

1. **I** Congratulate you, young Gentlemen, on your happy situation. Behold the reverend Fathers and Brethren present, all unite in praises to God for this institution ; they rejoice, that in these depraved times, you are inclined to dedicate yourselves to the Lord, and they think it will be your own faults, if you do not excel in sound learning and true religion. We have no suspicions—we are full of hopes ; you will, we doubt not, answer our expectations. Go, generous youths, our hearts go with you, retire to your studies, and surmount all the labour of learning for the pleasure of being learned, and for the joy of hoping to preach the gospel more unexceptionably ; go, instruct the ignorant, relieve the distressed, pour the balm of the gospel into the bosoms of the guilty ; reprove, exhort with all long-suffering and patience ; adorn our pulpits with the pure doctrines of the New Testament, and enforce the doctrines you preach by a holy life and conversation.

2. Forgive me, if I interrupt for a moment your pleasure. I foresee, without a spirit of prophecy, the trials that await you. You will preach a doctrine, not of this world ; the world will despise you, as the world despised your Master, and some supercilious Pilate will sneer, and say, *What is truth ?* In vain you will study to be wise ; worldly philosophers will account you ignorant, because you will not worship the class of idol gods they adore. In vain will you imbibe the Spirit and imitate the example of Christ, men of time-serving principles will account you uncandid, morose, and severe ; yea, some of your brethren, ani-

mated with passions of envy and pride, will suspect, or affect to suspect, your orthodoxy, or piety, or both. If two of this sort meet, each will pour the delicious poison of slander into the other's ear. If you be popular, you will be hated for what you cannot and ought not to help; if you be not, you will be neglected and forgotten when you most of all need support. If the God of nature hath formed you alert, and you have wit, vivacity, and fire, although you employ all to good purposes, yet some grave drone, who owes his gravity to constitution, will tax you with levity, and arrogantly making himself a standard of excellence, will call innocent mirth a mark of reprobation, and will require you to prove the soundness of your faith by fetching great deep sighs and groans, as if you were always at a funeral. If you have a natural gravity, others, full of sprightliness, will say you are unsociable and dull. If you use learning to elucidate Scripture, some ignorant clown will call you pedantic, and say you put learning in the place of the Spirit, and, for your sake, will exclaim against learning itself. If you speak plainly, and in popular stile, others will say, you do not respect your auditory. Preach all your system of doctrine in one sermon, you will be accounted scholastical and refined. Preach only one truth in one sermon, and it will be suspected you do not believe the rest. Open the privileges of grace, and you will deny the law; preach the law, and you will deny the influences of grace. And you, what will you do in all these skirmishes? You will perhaps appeal from the partial opinions of men, who know little but by hearsay, to the merciful tribunal of God. Each will deplore his infirmities, saying, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. O God, thy law is within my heart, I have not concealed thy loving-kindness. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; remember me, O my God, for good.*

3. Go then, enter the sanctuary of God; realize our wishes—*fight the good fight of faith*—animate all this assembly to continue to support this noble and generous institution. Let all your benefactors, your pa-

rents, your ministers, your tutors, the whole church, see the good seed of a learned and virtuous education bring forth an hundred fold. Repair, if it be repairable, the loss all the churches have sustained by the removal of their late pastors. *Our father, where is he? The prophet, doth he live for ever?* Yes, the father is here; the prophet doth live, he survives in his son and successor. I trust I may add, *instead of the fathers shall be children, a seed to serve the Lord for a thousand generations.*

A SACRAMENTAL ADDRESS.

1. **D**EARLY beloved, we are met together this day about the most solemn weighty service under heaven ; we are coming to a feast, where the feast-maker is God the Father ; the provision, God the Son, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink ; the guests, a company of poor sinners, unworthy such honour ; the crumbs under the table were too good for us, and yet we are admitted to taste of the provision upon the table ; and that which makes the feast is, *a hearty welcome* : God the Father bids you welcome to the flesh and blood of his Son ; think you hear him saying to you, O believing souls, *Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

2. The end of this feast is to keep in remembrance the death of Christ, and our deliverance by it, and thereby to convey spiritual nourishment and refreshment to our souls. But withal, give me leave to ask one question, What appetite have you to this feast ? Are you come hungry and thirsting ? such have the promise, *they shall be filled.* Canst thou say, like Christ, “ with desire I have desired to eat this ? ” In this ordinance here is Christ and all his benefits exhibited to thee. Art thou weak ? here is bread to strengthen thee. Art thou sad ? here is wine to comfort thee. What dost thou want—a pardon ? here it is sealed in blood ; though thy sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as wool.

3. It may be here are some that have been drunkards, swearers, scoffers, sabbath-breakers, and what not ; and God hath humbled you, and turned you from your abominations to come hither—here is for-

givenness for you. Dost thou want more of the Spirit of grace, more power against sin, particularly against thy besetting sin; why, here, from the fulness of Christ we receive and grace for grace, John i. 16. God hath spoken in his word, sealed in his sacrament, that Christ, pardon, grace, comfort, and glory is mine.

4. But if any be come hither with a false, unbelieving, filthy, hard heart, I do warn you seriously, in the name of Christ, presume not to come near this sacred ordinance. If you live in sin, or omit any duty against knowledge and conscience, or have any malice towards your neighbours, leave your gift, and go be reconciled, and then come. Better shame thyself for coming so near, than damn thyself for coming nearer.

5: I testify to those who say they have peace, though they still go on in sin, that there is poison in the bread, take and eat it at your peril; there is poison in the cup too, then drink not your own damnation. I wash my hands from the guilt of your sins, look you to it. On the other hand, you poor penitent souls that are lost in yourselves, here is a Christ to save you. Come, O come, ye that are weary and heavy laden, &c.

THE ORDER OF PUBLIC PRAYER.

1. **T**O acknowledge our great sinfulness, both original and actual, being liable thereby to eternal damnation.

2. To bewail our blindness, hardness, unbelief, impenitency, security, and lukewarmness; yea, and that the best of us have not so walked with God, as to keep our garments unspotted.

3. To confess our guilt, our unworthiness, and how justly we deserve the wrath of God; yea; that he should take his kingdom and gospel from us, and also cast us into hell for ever.

4. To encourage ourselves with hopes of a gracious answer to our prayers, in the sufficient satisfaction and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, confidently expecting his precious promises to be fulfilled, both in remitting our sins, and sanctifying our natures.

5. That he may send his love into our hearts, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, seal us by his Spirit, and give a full assurance of pardon and reconciliation; yea, that he will bind up the broken-hearted, open the eyes of unconverted sinners, that they may receive forgiveness of sins.

6. We must also pray for the propagation of the gospel in all nations, for the conversion of the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles, the fall of Antichrist, and hastening of the second coming of Christ; and for a blessing upon all christian churches, that he would heal all breaches and divisions, and preserve us all in peace.

7. Pray for all in authority, especially for our Sovereign, that both his person and government may be

preserved, and that his throne, religion, and righteousness, may be established through all generations; for the Queen, the Parliament, nobility, judges, magistrates, that God may fill them with his Spirit.

8. For all pastors and teachers, that they may be exemplary in their lives, and sound, faithful, and powerful in their ministry, and that all their labours may be followed with a divine blessing.

9. To pray that we may not be unprofitable hearers, but that he who teacheth to profit, may give us spiritual discernment, that we may account all things but dross compared with Christ and his knowledge, and that we may taste the fulness of those pleasures that are at his right hand for ever.

THE
Experience and Travels
OF
JOHN BEAUMONT;
INCLUDING
HIS CONVERSION TO GOD,
HIS
Call to the Ministry,
AND HIS
LABOURS, AS AN ITINERANT PREACHER,
FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS.

THE
EXPERIENCE AND TRAVELS
OF
JOHN BEAUMONT.

I WAS born April 7, 1761, at a farm-house near Holmfirth, Yorkshire: but when about a year old, my father removed to another farm, a mile distant, at Longley, where he continued till his death.

My parents were of the Church of England persuasion, and as such, the family were regular attendants on her services. They were respectable among their neighbours, and lived in good credit in the world.

My father was a professed musician, and was held in great esteem among men of that science. As such, he was often called forth as a public performer, and was a regular teacher of music for about forty years.

At four years of age, my father took me one night between his knees, and said, "Come, you have not said your lesson to-day; take this book, viz. Cheet-ham's Psalm Tune Book, and see if you can learn your eight notes." To me this seemed such a mystery, that I began to weep, and got off to bed. Soon after this, my eldest sister began to learn; and seeing her get some knowledge in notes, I was emboldened to try myself; and presently got to sing the old hundred psalm tune. My father was so much pleased with this, that he took all possible pains to bring me-for-

ward in learning. At seven years old, I sung a song in a public Oratorio ; and at ten years of age, I went with my father as a public performer to Lancaster, Kendal, and to several other places, and was greatly applauded as a capital performer, and thought by many a *sort of prodigy of genius*. I had a good treble voice, and could take my part in general with or without the book.

At twelve years of age, I could sing one part and play another at the same time on the bass viol ; and even then, often conducted a band of singers at the church on the sabbath-day, especially in my father's absence. We had a capital band of singers in those days, and in general chaunted the morning and evening services, and usually sung some anthem before the sermon, out of Dr. Croft, Green, Kent, or from some other capital composer. At that time, thank God, I had no inclination to associate with persons of a profligate cast, as all my vacant hours were chiefly spent in practising and performing some piece of vocal or instrumental music.

About this time, I got an old virginal, strung and tuned it myself, and without any instruction, immediately played upon it the tune of *God save the King*. My father sent me one month to learn to play on a keyed instrument ; all the rest I got by my own application.

At fourteen years of age, I could correct discords in music by my own ear, even without knowing the rules of composition ; yea, from an infant, my ear was so delicate as to discriminate chords from discords to the greatest nicety.

About this time I was much called into public company ; and yet, thank God, although I was frequently among dissipated characters, I never was intoxicated with liquor in my life.

His Conversion to God.

I HAD frequent drawings of the Spirit from very early days, and often conceived myself wonderfully happy when performing church music, and other things of that sort.—From a boy, I was always very fond of the public worship of God, and constantly attended at the established Church; nor do I recollect to have neglected in my early days, six times when I was able to attend; and not through fear of correction, but because it was my very great delight: and although I was then a stranger to my real state, yet I ever had a reverence and fear of God, and a most conscientious regard for divine worship; nor did I ever dare to behave myself any way improperly there at any time.

My father being much from home, and chiefly employed in teaching music, I now became of some use to him; and as I was seldom deficient in performing my part, it highly gratified him, and perhaps fed my own vanity.

When about sixteen years of age, I went with a musical party to Mexbro' near Barnsley, in Yorkshire; and on their feast-day, a Methodist preacher stood up in the street, and preached from the following words, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them; if not, neither would they be persuaded though one arose from the dead!" I was wonderfully struck by the discourse, the effects of which did not readily leave me. Soon after this, I dreamt of dying, and as I thought, found myself in hell, where I saw two persons whom I knew. I imagined the fire was but kindling, and I seemed as if borne up in the smoke, so as to feel no pain. I mentioned this to a serious neighbour, who advised me to turn to God, saying, these were loud calls to prepare for death.

About this time, the Methodists introduced preaching and prayer-meetings into our neighbourhood; but I could but seldom attend, as my father was a great Churchman, and very averse to Methodism. How-

ever, the more I went to hear, the more I discovered myself a sinner. I frequently heard Mr. Thomas Longley, and several other preachers, whose sermons were very useful to me ; in fact, I plainly discovered myself in such a state, that it was high time for me to be in good earnest to save my own soul.

Now my father learned that I attended the meetings frequently, which so displeased him, that he told me in good earnest, that "if I was determined to go amongst the Methodists, I should not stay at his house." I told him, I saw the necessity of serving God, and felt it good to go to their meetings, which made me resolve not to give up attending them. He replied, "Then we must part," adding, "that I should not stay with him another day." I therefore took him at his word, and went to a brother-in-law, told him what had happened, adding, that I intended to learn the cloth making business, and if he choosed, I would engage with him. From that time, I had my liberty to go to the means of grace whenever I pleased. What my father did, was not so much from a spirit of persecution, as hoping thereby to break me off from going amongst the Methodists, lest it should spoil me as a musician, and entirely frustrate his designs concerning me. After this there was a wonderful noise in the neighbourhood about my forsaking home, giving up music, turning Methodist, and in fact, becoming a lunatic ; and many attempts were made to bring me back to my old course. My father thinking he had a right to command me, did once oblige me to attend a concert, which he had for his own benefit ; but as soon as it was over, I quitted the place, and immediately set off to a watch-night. I soon discovered, that the spirit and conduct of musicians were such, that there was no way for me, but to quit the whole at once, or make nothing out in religion ; and therefore I determined to have done with it, and apply myself wholly to the means of grace. And from that time, I carefully avoided either performing music myself, or being much amongst musical friends ; nor did I pay the least attention to that

science, except in a manner forced to it, for at least fourteen years.

I now employed all my vacant hours in a different way, and procured Allein's Alarm, Baxter's Call, and Russell's Seven Sermons; these, with Walsh's, Hallyburton's, and Gregory Lopez's Lives, were made a singular blessing to me. It was then I began to adopt the useful method of rising early in a morning, for reading and prayer. I also became very fond of retirement, spent much time in the fields, or wherever I could be alone; and these exercises became so familiar to me, that I never seemed better than when thus employed. Besides, I always seemed to reap more benefit from my own prayers when offered up vocally, than mentally. Perhaps this was one reason why I was so partial to being much in the fields in my private devotions.

About this time, Mr. Thomas Taylor, Mr. William Bramah, Mr. Howard, and Mr. John Oliver, came into the Birstal Circuit, which then included what is now the Huddersfield, and part of the Barnsley Circuits. Mr. Taylor's preaching greatly edified me, but Mr. Bramah's did not so well suit me; yet others were greatly affected. And so great a work of God began then in that Circuit, that in one year's time, it was said seven hundred joined the Society! One Sunday evening at Holmfirth, I attended the giving of the tickets in the Society meeting, and my friend Joseph Woofinden strongly urged me to join the Society; when Mr. Taylor asked, "What are you doing with that young fellow there?" My friend said, "I am striving to persuade him to take a ticket." He answered, "Never mind him; triflers always keep at the back, and while he stays there, he will do us no good: let him go about his business." This so affected me, that I stopped till all was over, and then requested he would give me a ticket.

I now became more serious and earnest than ever, and sought the Lord with my whole heart: but perhaps for want of some one to give me proper ideas of

faith, or rather because I looked too much at myself, and too little at Christ, or else, because I expected something too great; however, on some account, I was a considerable time before I enjoyed the pardoning love of God. But, thank God, when I had tried every means, and could get no lasting comfort, but was constantly writing bitter things against myself; in a moment, the Lord broke into my soul, and made my heart like melting wax before the fire. I saw by faith, as if Christ was just crucified for me; and all my burden fell off instantly. Then I could praise God all the day long.

For some time I kept it to myself, till one day I ventured to tell my brother-in-law what God had done for my soul, although in fear and trembling. He had been converted some time, therefore was the better able to advise me. He encouraged me to believe what God had done, and hold fast my confidence. I then found my peace flowed like a river; and O what blessed and happy days did I enjoy!—This was about the nineteenth year of my age.

I then got Mr. Fletcher's Works, and read them attentively over with great profit. The first book of his which I got, was, *The Polemical Essay on Christian Perfection*, which gave me clear views of that doctrine. I read them attentively, till most of his arguments became familiar to me. In fact, I considered Mr. Fletcher's Works, as the best explanation of the critical parts of the Scriptures relative to doctrines, of any other writings I had seen; and I still think the same. I likewise read Mr. Wesley's Sermons, his Appeals, his Journals, and some part of his other works; together with the large Minutes of the Conference; and thought myself quite clear in all our doctrines.

Having now fulfilled my engagement with my brother-in-law, I went back to my father's, set up my own business in the family, and employed my two brothers. I was then *very devout*, constant and regular in all the means of grace. In those days, it was my rule to attend one class-meeting every week, be-

sides my own ; and as there were three or four within a few miles, I took them alternately ; and many very happy times I had.

His Call to the Ministry.

THE Lord now very much impressed my mind with a great desire to be useful in my generation ; and I frequently found, in meeting classes, and in speaking to the people (which I frequently did), that the Lord wonderfully blessed me. Indeed, the more I exercised myself in that way amongst the people, the happier I was. I then began to exhort a little in public, and from less to more I went on, till one Sunday evening, I was induced to take the following words ; *This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, John xvii. 3. From that time, the friends would not be satisfied, without my acting in the capacity of a local preacher : but I judged myself so unfit for the work, that I was frequently most heartily ashamed even of the very best I could say. I was then entered into the plan amongst the local preachers, and exerted myself as much as my abilities and strength would admit. Upon the whole, from the seventeenth year of my age to the twenty-fourth, I was thoroughly devout, serious, and diligent ; and can now look back on those seven years of my life with great pleasure, and really do not know, were I to live them over again, whether I should spend them to better purpose, unless it were, that I might be better directed and assisted in my studies. In these years also I was much favoured in hearing several very eminent preachers.

About this time, August, 1784, I attended the Leeds Conference ; and when I saw Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, and Mr. Fletcher, I imagined I saw three of

the greatest men in the world.—During the Conference time, Mr. Fletcher preached one evening from Heb. xi. last verse, *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* He dwelt much on the context, which speaks of the faith and works of the ancient worthies, and strongly enforced what he termed a *working faith*. I was blessed beyond description, and thought him certainly the most angelic man I had ever heard.

I had at different times felt strong impressions, that I ought to give myself wholly to the ministry; but to do it as a Methodist travelling preacher, one thing seemed to stand in my way. There was a young woman with whom I had met in class many years, and with whom I had corresponded for some time; and I learned that no married preacher was admitted to travel, and that every single man must travel four years before he be allowed to marry. This seemed to me so disagreeable in my present circumstances, that I concluded we would marry, and that I would do all the good I could in a local way. Therefore, on Easter Monday, 1785, being each about twenty-four years of age, we married; and she certainly was a person of many excellencies. She was truly meek and lowly of heart; we were therefore very happy together. But having only been married eight-and-forty weeks, she was suddenly taken away by a very short sickness. Before her death, I said to her, “My dear, do not be anxious about me; for if you die, I shall give myself wholly to the ministry.” This was but a few days before her death; after which, I felt what none can know, but those who have passed through the same! She was convinced of sin at seventeen years of age, and soon found the Lord; and walked worthy of the gospel till she died. She kept her confidence in God till the last, and died in peace. An account of her life is printed in the *Armínian Magazine* for 1789, p. 72.

Soon after her death, Mr. Isaac Brown, who was then the superintendent in Huddersfield Circuit, said to me one day, “Well, John, do you not think the Lord has taken away your wife, that you may now have no obstacle in the way of travelling?” I told

him I could not tell. He added, "Mr. Wesley will be coming to Huddersfield very soon, and if you be willing, I will mention you to him." I replied, I shall leave myself in your hands. Mr. Wesley came, I was introduced to him in private; and after asking me a few questions, he added, "Your character will come before the Conference, and if nothing be brought against it, you may expect an appointment to a Circuit. I now began to arrange my affairs so as, if I was called out, I might be ready as soon as possible. When the Conference came, I received a letter, saying, that I was appointed for Chester Circuit; and after settling my affairs, and giving up my business to my eldest brother, I bought a horse, saddle, bags, &c. and bid farewell to all my friends. But when on my way to Chester, language cannot paint what I suffered; my heart truly felt its own bitterness!

His Travels as an Itinerant Preacher.

MY first-appointment as a travelling preacher was, as before mentioned, to Chester Circuit, August 1786, with Mr. Richard Rodda, and Mr. Thomas Brisco. I now found, to give up friends, relations, business, and all temporal concerns, and enter on a new field of action, calling forth one's powers to be exercised in a new channel, was, in some respects, far more trying than I expected.

When I first went to Chester, it was indeed in much fear and trembling; however, I did the best I could, and got through the year quite as well as I expected. Mrs. Fletcher living at Madeley in this Circuit, was of singular use to me; for to her I opened my mind freely, and she gave me that advice, which has been of great use to me ever since. Doubtless, the loss of my partner had so affected my spirits,

as to render me much more disconsolate than otherwise I might have been ; but Mrs. Fletcher was in similar circumstances, having buried her husband about one year : She strongly advised me to drink the bitter cup, viz. to bear the pain of mind occasioned by it with resignation, until the Lord pleased to take it away.

At that time the Chester Circuit included, what is now the Shrewsbury Circuit, part of the Congleton Circuit, and went down as far as Bridgnorth, about sixty miles from Chester. Upon the whole, I found it more difficult to be content and happy, in travelling about from place to place, with no fixed home, than I imagined I should have done : and am very certain, that no one ought to enter on this line of conduct, but he who is fully convinced it is his duty, and that has great love to God, and zeal for the salvation of souls ; yea, and to whom preaching, meditation, prayer, and bringing souls to God, is more his element than any other work.

At the Manchester Conference, August 1787, I was appointed for Worcester Circuit, where I went with a little more courage than at my first setting out. Here I found a very affectionate people ; I lodged at Mr. King's, the kindness of whose family to me was such, as to endear them ever since.

This Circuit was then a sort of longshred, which reached from Kidderminster in Worcestershire, to Knightcoat in Warwickshire. We went to Bingworth, Broadmarsden, and through the vale of Evesham, where the roads in winter were very bad indeed, but where there is a tract of as fine grazing land, as in most counties I have travelled in.

At Christmas Mr. Wesley ordered Mr. Marshall and me to change ; he came to Worcester, and I went to Stroud, which was then the head of the Gloucester part. At Stroud there were some very respectable and agreeable families, which greatly added to the comfort of the place. At Gloucester also we opened their new chapel that year, which added to the respect of that society, although there was no very crowded congregation. Mrs. Conibeer, at whose house we then lodged, was a generous, hospitable woman, and

kind to the people and preachers to a very high degree.

At the London Conference, August 1788, my superintendent said something of me which was unfavourable to my character, on which account I was left without an appointment to any Circuit for that year. He wrote me no word about it, nor did he ever assign me any reason for so doing. Upon my getting some information of it from another quarter, I took coach for London, but the Conference was broken up. However, I obtained a hearing with Mr. Wesley, but found him distant and shy, till the day following, when he told me he had just received a letter from the stewards of Gloucester, much in my favour, and as he was coming there soon on his way to Wales, he desired me to hasten down with all speed. When he came, he found the people's minds, particularly at Gloucester, much prejudiced against their late superintendent, who very unjustly had thought that I had taken part against him. Mr. Wesley then gave me a guinea, and told me to go home and see my friends, adding, the first vacancy that fell out, I should have : This tolerably satisfied both the stewards and myself. Accordingly I set off for Yorkshire, where my friends lived; but coming to Birmingham I met with Mr. Wrigley, who was appointed for the Huddersfield Circuit, but had accidentally broke his arm in coming from the Conference. I shewed him Mr. Wesley's note, and he gave me another to Mr. Boothby, the other preacher in Huddersfield Circuit, saying, *that I must take his place till his arm got well*. I was both astonished and humbled at this circumstance, as apparently it seemed, as if I must have a Circuit, whoever had. I went forward till I came to Burslem, where I met with my old friend Mr. Rodda. After some conversation he desired me to preach; after which the friends wrote to Mr. Wesley for me to stop there, instead of Mr. Thomas Shaw, who was appointed, but had not then arrived. Mr. Wesley gave his consent; but as Mr. Shaw soon came, it was judged best for me to proceed on to Huddersfield. Upon my arrival, Mr. Boothby was very glad of my help, and directly sent me into the Circuit.

My old friends received me very kindly, and, I believe, thought me much improved. Here I stayed until Mr. Wrigley's arm got better. I may just observe, here it was that I met with my present wife, as if Providence had sent me there for that end. Before my marriage, I wrote to Mr. Wesley for his approbation, the substance of whose answer was as follows :

“ My dear Brother,

“ I have no objection to your marrying the person you mention, provided she be willing for you to continue an itinerant preacher.

“ I am, yours, &c.

“ J. WESLEY.”

Soon after this, Mr. Rodda wrote me a letter from Burslem, to say, *that Mr. Dobson, one of their preachers, was so unwell as to spit blood, consequently had concluded to decline travelling.* And near the same time, Mr. Wrigley wrote, to say, *that his arm was got so much better, that he was coming to his Circuit very soon.* We accordingly set off for Burslem, and reached there a little before Christmas. In those days, we found Burslem a sweet place, for at that time there were several very kind families, which are since removed, or some part of them dead.

The work of God was so prosperous in the Circuit, that Mr. Rodda prevailed upon Mr. Dobson to stop ; and as his health got better, we enlarged the Circuit, so as to have work for four preachers. At that time, Newcastle Society was in a lovely state, and there was no place in the Circuit where I was more delighted in preaching to the people than there.

At the Leeds Conference, 1789, I was appointed to Burslem Circuit a second year, with Mr. R. Roberts, Mr. J. Brettle, and Mr. A. Mosley. Most of the preachers were then very fond of the Leek mountains, namely, that part of the country which is now called Leek Circuit. The pure strong air on those hills, with the true simplicity of the people, rendered it a desirable part of the Circuit to go to, at least for one fortnight in eight weeks. At present, the number of places is more than doubled in that part of the country.

During this year, a most dreadful contested election took place at Newcastle, which several of our friends

got too much into the spirit of, and which did the society much harm; indeed, I have my doubts whether that society has ever been since, what it was before.

At the Bristol Conference, August 1790, I was appointed to the Liverpool Circuit, with Mr. W. Myles, Mr. J. Denton, and Mr. J. Burgess. Here we spent a very happy year. We had then the whole of what is now called the Northwich Circuit, joined with Liverpool, which was divided from it the following Conference. Some of the country parts of the Circuit were very barren of religion, but Liverpool made up for all the rest.

It was in the spring of this year that Mr. Wesley died; and, to be sure, great was our lamentations on the occasion. Many prophesied evil concerning the body of Methodists; but, thank God, they have all proved false prophets, for since then we have seen greater things than ever was seen before, both in England, Ireland, America, and the West India Islands; we have prospered more since than ever before as a body of people, and may yet truly say, *the best of all is, God is with us.*

I was sorry that I did not attend at this Conference, viz. Bristol, because it was the last Mr. Wesley ever attended, and I should have been received into full connection by him at that time; but Mr. Roberts wished me to take care of the Circuit during the Conference time.

At the Manchester Conference, August 1791, I was appointed to Nottingham Circuit, with Mr. T. Carlil, Mr. W. Butterfield, and Mr. T. Wood. Here I was greatly delighted with the people, and have been partial to the place ever since. We had a very long straggling Circuit of about 200 miles round, which then included what is now called the Newark Circuit. In this Circuit we did not eat the bread of idleness; for many of our journies were long, and some of the roads very bad; but the Lord revived his work in so many places, that during the two years I spent there, we took in ten new places, built five new chapels, viz. Long-Eaton, Mansfield, Bulwell, Bassford, and Ratcliff. The Lord also raised up ten local preachers, and

we added to the different societies above 200 members. When I first went to that Circuit, there were 48 in society at Newark, and when I left, there were 130.

My second year's appointment to the same Circuit, was with Mr. W. Thom, Mr. J. Furness, and one more, which never came; but I wrote to Mr. Mather, saying, we had a very promising young man, of the name of George Morley, in Nottingham, and that I had consulted the leaders and stewards, to know if they had any objection to his taking the Circuit, provided we obtained his consent. They were all quite agreeable, and as Mr. Mather said we might employ him on those conditions, he therefore took the Circuit immediately.

At the Leeds Conference, August 1793, I was appointed to Castle-Donnington Circuit, with Mr. T. Greaves, to which place I went with some reluctance; first, because I was appointed the Superintendent, which office I did not covet; and secondly, because the societies and congregations were much smaller there than in the Nottingham Circuit, where I had been. However, we had not been long there before the congregations increased, and the work of God began to revive; yea, and the people manifested the greatest kindness and affection; and, thank God, some good was done this year.

At the London Conference 1794, we were both appointed to the same Circuit a second year; and blessed be the Lord, he revived his work yet more in several parts of the Circuit, particularly at Castle-Donnington. Something similar to the revival in Yorkshire took place this year; so that our love-feasts, watch-nights, and other meetings, were not only very lively, but some of them rather noisy. However, amidst it all, good was done.

In this Circuit, it pleased God to give me a deeper baptism of the Spirit than I had ever obtained. For many years I had fully believed the doctrine of sanctification, or Christian holiness, and had earnestly sought, and at different times seemed as if I possessed it, but never till then did I so fully enjoy the witness of the Spirit, at least in so clear a manner. I received

the blessing at a love-feast, on Christmas-Day, at which time I was so overpowered, that every joint seemed loosened, and such a calm sweet peace ensued, as I cannot describe. Since then the Lord has done great things for me, and I believe it my duty to hold up a full and present salvation to the people, wherever I go; and if that doctrine be rightly enforced, it will never fail to do good to those that hear it.

At the Manchester Conference 1795, I was appointed to the Hinckley Circuit, with Mr. L. Leadbrook, to which place I went with great reluctance, from the knowledge I had of the state of that Circuit. When we got to Coventry, which was the residence of the family, to which place my predecessor had taken the furniture the year before, we found the society in a very poor condition. We were informed, that not more than seven persons had received their regular tickets the quarter before the Conference. This led me to suppose there was something radically wrong amongst them. Several times I called the society together before I could prevail; and when they did stop, such unpleasant things came forward, one against another, as made my heart sink within me; nor from that time could I ever hope to see any good done in that place. As to Mr. Leadbrook, my fellow-labourer, he had taken his family to his farm in Warwickshire, and was getting in his harvest. I informed him of the situation the Circuit was in, requesting he would come and take his place as soon as possible; but he turned it off with a smile, and said, I had no faith. After waiting for his coming six or eight weeks, I then told him in a letter, if he did not directly come and take his place, I must send for another preacher. His answer was, "I might get a preacher as soon as I thought proper, as he did not mean to travel any longer." There were more reasons than one why Jesus Christ chose fishermen and tent-makers to preach the gospel.

On going round the Circuit, I found very small congregations, scarcely any meeting in class, and generally the people through the Circuit were in a poor drooping state; and out of the 150 members only,

which I found in the whole Circuit, very few indeed were alive to God. It certainly is very trying, to leave Circuits, with numerous congregations, and lively societies, and go to others the very reverse. None know how it affects one's feelings, but those who make trial of it.

In all the Circuit there was no steward but Mr. Bonsor for the Hinckley society; nor could I get any one to be the Circuit-steward at any rate. I was therefore obliged to be my own, which stewardship I kept until I left the Circuit.

Some time in October, having wrote for another preacher, Mr. James Penman arrived on the Circuit, who was sent to us from Banff, in Scotland; and never was I more glad to see any friend in my life, and, I speak it to his honour, never did I travel with a more true-hearted man. We then fell regularly into our places, nor had we been long in the Circuit before the people began to revive. At Christmas Mr Penman gave tickets at Coventry, and the whole money laid down for quarterage was but eighteen-pence; and Mr. Riley, a local preacher, took it up, for something which he said he was out of pocket. When brother Penman told me the affair, I said, Well, since this is the case, we will not come near them any more, but go and break up new ground, and see if we cannot get a people elsewhere. We therefore went into that part of the country which lies betwixt Hinckley and Lutterworth, namely, to Shanford, Sapcoat, Leir, Dunton, Whetstone, and Thorp, and to some other places, where we met with dreadful persecution—an account of which, although it might be proper here, yet to give the whole account, would swell this narrative too large. However, I beg leave just to mention what we met with at one or two places.

The first time I went to Thorp, I fixed myself on a chair, at the side of the farmer's yard, at whose house we went, and while I was at prayer, the mob collected with different kinds of weapons, so that by the time I had finished my prayer, they came up to the people. I gave out a verse of a hymn, and, while singing, the mob began to jostle about till they got up

to me ; I stepped down from the chair, when a scuffle ensued about the chair ; I prevailed on the friends not to contend about it. The noise very soon became so great, that though I retired into the farmer's yard, and preached my sermon, little could be heard to profit. We then retired into the farmer's house, till we supposed the mob were gone ; however, we found them still in waiting, but were advised to take a back way, and for that time eluded them. Before we went again we got the house licensed, and preached within doors ; but during the time of our preaching, the mob collected all manner of weapons and nastiness together, and, as we perceived their design, we attempted to elude them as before, but this was prevented by a watch. There was, therefore, no way but to venture through the crowd. Presently Mr. King, one of our friends, had his head broke with a stone, so that the blood ran freely. Our road being blocked up, we took down some meadows, but soon came to a river three yards across, and about one yard deep ; I preferred the river to the merciless mob, and waded through ; one of the friends they pushed into it, who got a good ducking before he could recover himself. The rest made their way through the mob as well as they could ; one of the friends had one or more of his ribs broke, and another was thrown into a hedge bottom, so that the doctor took a thorn out of his cheek near an inch long, after he got home ; several others were sadly abused. We were advised to seek redress, which we did, but no Justice in that neighbourhood would do any thing for us. At Leicester, however, we did meet with a Justice who took up our cause, and indicted several on the Riot Act ; but they suffered it to be brought into Court before they would submit, when they agreed to pay the costs, which was 34l. We went several times after to the same place, but always at the hazard of our lives, and constantly through showers of stones. They then took to another expedient, namely, that of breaking down the farmer's hedges in the night that took us in, cutting up his fruit trees, breaking his farming utensils, and every thing they could lay their hands on ; nay,

so bitter was their persecuting spirit, that we plainly saw every person that went, whether preacher or hearer, was in danger of his life. We therefore *shook the dust off our feet as a testimony against them*. Suffice it just to say, we broke into eight or ten different places; got societies at five or six of them; but the persecutors were so bitter, as to oblige us to give up the rest.

One time in going to Whetstone, I met a farmer, and asked, as I was going to preach at their town that evening, whether he would *take me in, and give me and my horse a night's lodging*? He answered, *Take you in! what can I do with you and your horse? Our horses have all got the scab, and our stable is open to the sky, and what can I do with taking you in?*—To this place we went many times, not knowing where to find either bed or board. Here however we got a society; but the persecutors did the man who let us preach, so much mischief, that we were obliged to give it up. But I have heard, the Leicester preachers have a society there, and have now regular preaching. I hope they are reaping the fruit of our labours.

The first time we went to Shanford, vast numbers came to hear; but soon after, several wicked persons came to persecute; and during the preaching, they cut the saddle girths, and also the mane and tail of my mare, and so horribly did they roar, that the man who took us in (and who had agreed to have the house licensed) came to me at Hinckley, and desired we would give it up, and not come any more. I told him I believed the Lord had a people in that place, and if he, through fear of a little persecution, shrunk back from the cross, doubtless, God would require their blood at his hands. He seemed quite confounded, and left me, not knowing what to say. However, he came again and said, my words about *their blood being required at his hands*, so much affected him, that he had concluded for us to get a licence and come as usual. After preaching there a few times, one Sunday-morning after the sermon, I proposed to take down the names of those who wished to serve God, and formed a class of nineteen persons. At Leir

also we got large congregations, and formed a society there likewise, and soon got a very commodious chapel.

At Hinckley our congregations got so large, that we were obliged to build two side galleries, each gallery was seven yards by three, which we got built for 50*l*. The seats were soon let, and brought in 14*l*. annually. Added to this, we got a new vestry, which greatly tended to the comfort of the place; and never did I enjoy better times than I have done in that chapel. Hinckley Society was raised during that two years, from 48 to 130, and the good times we then had will never be forgotten; yea, and in these two years, the Circuit was raised from 150 to 350 members.

At the Leeds Conference, 1797, I was appointed to Rotherham Circuit, with Mr. J. Furness, to which place I went with great delight—first, because in this country, religion has had a glorious spread. If genuine Methodism is to be found in any part of the connexion, I believe it is here. Secondly, my coming to Rotherham brought me within a few miles of my mother and friends. Here several things conduced to our comfort, as, both in Rotherham and the Circuit, we met with many agreeable families, with whom we were very happy. Again, we lived in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, where we were frequently going to their love-feasts and other means, and had them returned by the friends in a very blessed way. And also, being so near my relations and friends, they were frequently coming to see us. And I might add, that in this Circuit there were many persons in a very blessed state of mind, living in the full exercise of faith and love, and remarkable for their power with God in prayer. Our love-feasts were blessed seasons, nor did I find that difficulty in keeping up discipline that I had done in some other places. With many persons in this Circuit I was very closely united; we had no very rapid increase, but yet the work of God went on well, and was in a growing good state, and both our spiritual and temporal concerns were in a prosperous way.

That Conference, both Doncaster and Barnsley were given up, with some other places, from the Circuit.

Doncaster, with a few places from Epworth Circuit, formed a new one, and Barnsley went to Wakefield, and has since become the head of a Circuit, principally taken from Wakefield and Huddersfield. But although we lost these considerable places, yet those which were left, particularly the Sunday places, came forward so nobly, that in money matters we soon made up the loss, and found no lack. Here we spent two comfortable years, and left the people with considerable regret.

When we first went to Rotherham, it was at the time of Mr. Kilham's division, and sorry I was to see what pains were taken to draw the people away; but thank God, the leaders especially, were steady to the old cause, so that we did not lose one society. This was the more remarkably singular, because at Sheffield, which is but six miles off, they got from the old connexion near 800 persons.

At Rotherham we had an afflicted mother in Israel, Mrs. Green—she was well known to many of the preachers, and had formerly been in good circumstances, but at one stroke she became penniless. But the Lord raised her up such friends, that although she lived many years after her misfortunes, all her wants were amply supplied. She lay afflicted in bed for six or seven years before her death, and at times was most strangely oppressed with a convulsive kind of fits, attended with racking pains. She likewise had a very bad hand, a continual wound, which at times was very troublesome—only her youngest daughter paid all possible attention to it; yet she bore it all with remarkable patience and fortitude. Her husband was formerly a schoolmaster and a local preacher, who was the chief person concerned in building the first Methodist chapel there in 1761. She was a Methodist of near sixty years standing, who possessed very great knowledge in the scriptures. Her experience was deep and sound, and she well understood Satan's devices; yea, she was deep read in divine revelation. She had for many years known the perfect love of God, and although confined to her bed, she had as public a spirit as if actively employed in the work of God. It

was impossible to visit her without getting some good, and indeed many sought her advice in all difficult cases. In fact, she seemed at times to possess a sort of apostolic spirit, which is ever attended with clear discernment in spiritual things, and great familiarity and power with God in prayer. For some years before her death, it was difficult to obtain an interview with her, except in the morning part of the day, without her being overtaken either with hysteric fits, or strong pain. However, it was an usual saying of her's, "If I did not suffer in this way, I should not so well have known the personal sufferings of Christ." In these sufferings she thought herself honoured, in *drinking of her Lord's cup*, and, in some measure, *being baptized with his baptism*. We were favoured with many profitable interviews with her during our stay in Rotherham; but she is now gone to her eternal rest, and safely lodged in Abraham's bosom.

At the Manchester Conference, 1799, I was appointed to the Birstal Circuit, with Mr. M. Emmitt. Here we stayed two years, and had many blessings and some trials, particularly during the second year. At this time corn was at the dearest, yea, in that country as high as seven shillings the stone; but, thank God, one way or other our wants were supplied, and we suffered no great lack. During our stay here, we met with some spiritual advantages, one of which was their Saturday night's band-meeting. Of all the meetings I ever attended, that was certainly the best. It was then a proverb, "If any want a blessing, let them go to Birstal band-room." If, on those occasions, persons had but simplicity and courage enough to lay open their state, and would but come forward in faith among the people, (sometimes near an hundred in number,) and suffer those faithful men and women to lay their case before God in earnest, faithful, importunate prayer, there was scarcely an instance where any went away without the blessing. Many backsliders were also restored in that meeting. Old J. Binns used to say, "I like to come betimes to your Birstal band-meeting, for I consider that meeting

as the spring-head in this Circuit, and if that runs freely, the streams will soon reach us all."

During this year, we had a great revival amongst the young people, chiefly from eight and ten years old, to twenty or upwards. I certainly took a very active part in doing them all the good I possibly could. I have heard those creatures talk and pray, so as to have astonished even St. Paul, if he had been there; yea, if ever I saw a real work of God, it was there. At Morley also we had a considerable revival. This year we were visited with the fever in our family; the two girls had it very bad, so that the eldest was insensible for three weeks—the three boys had it more slightly, I believe, owing to their being soundly puked in the beginning of the disorder. The best servant we ever had, or perhaps ever shall have, took it from the children, and died in three weeks; but it was in a good time, for the Lord had just converted her soul, and she died happy in the Lord.

This year I published my Harmonic Magazine, which, with my ministerial labours, (to every part of which I attended with delight) rendered my work in this Circuit very close indeed. However, I got what time I could from sleep, and in fact worked night and day to accomplish my point. But what with so much preaching, the care of all the societies, and this additional labour, it most certainly shook my bodily frame exceedingly.

In this Circuit, during those hard times, several things occurred relative to the dearth of provisions among the people, which were very afflicting. One woman said in speaking her experience, "If the Lord will but once more give me a creel full of bread,* for my children, I will desire no more in this world." Another man said, "One day my landlord came and marked my goods for the rent. My youngest child asked, *Father, what is this man doing?* I said, he is going to sell our goods for the rent." He added, "I

* Here they live on oat bread, and dry it on the top of the house.

went into the neighbour's house, and related our distress, and the man gave me a guinea to pay my rent with." Another man who usually attended our band-meeting, who had eight children, used to give us such wonderful accounts of the providence of God, saying, "he believed God would sooner overturn the world, than suffer his promise to fail"—*Thy bread shall be given, and thy water shall be sure.* One poor man came to our friend's house at Westgate-hill, Mr. Joseph Hargraves, they gave him a pint of ale, and set the bread and cheese before him, and next morning he was found dead in his bed. It was supposed extreme want urged him to eat too freely, which in all probability occasioned his death.

Many other distressing scenes occurred, which would be too tedious, and take up too much time to relate here. Suffice it just to say, a most dreadful fever soon followed, which carried off great numbers. It seemed that many through want were so reduced, and through adulterated bad corn were so disordered, that when the fever took them, many fell like rotten sheep. About twenty died in the workhouse in three months, and we were advised to desist from preaching there for a time. Also several of the corpses were carried into the cow-shed to prevent the contagion spreading in the house, and a cow calving in the place, took the infection and died also. So virulent and contagious was the disorder, that some said it would never abate until the roof was taken off the workhouse; others said, if it was, it would infect the whole neighbourhood. They concluded not to take it off, but to white-wash all the rooms with quick lime, and in the course of time the disorder abated. To hear the discontent and murmurings amongst the people was distressing. However, amidst it all, the Lord stood by his people, and they who trusted in him had their wants supplied.

At the end of my two years labours in this Circuit, I was so debilitated in body, and so reduced in my health, that I was advised to go to Scarborough for the benefit of sea-bathing, at which time a respectable

friend in the Circuit offered to pay my expences, which kindness I gladly received, but not till after the Conference. This good friend wrote to a gentlewoman in Scarborough, to do every thing in her power to raise my health and spirits. My visit was exceedingly useful, for after bathing a few days, my excessive night-sweats began to abate, and my strength returned by degrees.

At the Leeds Conference, August, 1801, I was appointed for Doncaster Circuit, with Mr. R. Harrison. After being in the Circuit some time, I perceived two things would be a trial to me that year; first, the very great difference there was between the Circuit I had left, and that I was come to. The Birstal Circuit was so compact, as to enable me to be with my family every day, if I choosed it; but in Doncaster Circuit, little more than one week in four. In the Birstal Circuit I had left numerous congregations, and lively societies; but in this the difference was such, as in my weak state affected me very much. Secondly, I found the views of my fellow-traveller and myself were so different, that we could not think alike scarcely in any one thing. This occasioned several unpleasant things in the course of the year, which made me right glad when the year was ended.

At the Bristol Conference, August, 1802, I was appointed to Newark Circuit, with Mr. J. Ogilvie and Mr. W. Lockwood. Here I went with great pleasure, having travelled there ten years before, when it was in the Nottingham Circuit. It was well for me this year, that I had not the care of the Circuit, as thereby I was more at liberty to attend to those things which were more to my advantage. I soon found myself as if escaped out of prison, quite at liberty. Brother Ogilvie, I found, was a man of an excellent spirit, and I clearly saw we should think and act alike in every thing. We therefore entered upon our Circuit with pleasure, and the Lord soon began to revive his work. We presently began to break into new places, and the Lord gave us great success, so that in every place where we broke up new ground, the Lord gave us wonderful prosperity. Some of our new places lay

so wide, that it made our Circuit very extensive. This year we formed twelve new societies, and had a clear increase of 200 members, so greatly did the Lord prosper his work in our hands. During this year, the Circuit became so extensive, that the labour was above my strength; I was therefore laid up for a fortnight, my strength being quite exhausted. However, I recovered by degrees, and took my place in the Circuit again as cheerfully as ever.

At the year's end the Circuit was again divided, (which was the case when I left it ten years before,) and Grantham was made the head of the lower part. Many solicited my stay, but I judged some other person, with a smaller family, would be more proper for so infant a Circuit than myself.

At the Manchester Conference, August, 1803, I requested to be sent to Leek Circuit, for the benefit of my health, knowing that the strong pure air on the Staffordshire hills was very conducive to brace my relaxed habit, which was kindly granted. On my arrival at Leek, Mr. T. Gee, with whom I was appointed to travel this year, desired I would immediately take the hills, in order to settle some difficult matters. I set off and got to my place; but after preaching I was taken with such a most dreadful sickness, cramp, and vomiting, that really if I had gone through another night like it, I should most certainly have finished my course in this world. This sickness confined me for about a fortnight, after which I returned to my family, again took my place in the Circuit, and got a little strength by slow degrees.

At the London Conference, August, 1804, I was appointed a second year for the same Circuit, with Mr. A. Treffit. In this Circuit I was not favoured with seeing the work of God prosper, as it had done in many other Circuits where I had laboured, which often led me to wonder what could be the reason of it. Upon close examination, several reasons appeared clear to me; one was, that a great part of the men on the hills, especially near the Flash, travel with Manchester goods to all parts of the nation, and are from

home near one half their time, as such, they are at a great loss for men to carry on their meetings during their absence. Another reason was, in the winter on those hills, the weather is frequently very severe, so that it is very difficult to get out at nights; and as most part of the inhabitants lie scattered, with here and there a house, it requires great resolution constantly to attend their class and other meetings. This is one chief reason why the people do not meet so regularly as in some other places; and all who have minutely examined how the work of God is carried on, well know, that if our class meetings are not well attended, there is but small hopes of much prosperity.

It was during this year I published my *Religious Repository*, and *The Key to the Bible*. The Repository was in fact the labour of many years, and contains a great many religious subjects, so compressed, as to afford a vast deal of information on most important points, moral, evangelical, experimental, and practical, every way calculated to improve the mind; and I am happy to find it gives general satisfaction. The Key to the Bible is principally intended for the rising generation, and chiefly calculated to make the Scriptures more easily understood.

At the Sheffield Conference, 1805, I was appointed to Bolton Circuit, with Mr. S. Bradburn. To this place I had no desire to go for various reasons, but could not procure any convenient change with any of the preachers. During the Conference time I learnt, that neither Mr. B. nor the Bolton people wanted any preacher for that year but himself; this being the case, my entrance amongst them was not pleasant, nor indeed was I ever sufficiently myself, or properly happy all the year. Several things I learnt this year, which must be of use to me in future; much I learnt by seeing and hearing Mr. Bradburn, and can sufficiently clear myself before God, for supplying all the country places with preaching, and for giving him all the assistance in my power. Three reasons induced me to this—first, his great abilities as a preacher; secondly, his long standing in the ministry; and thirdly, his often infirmities, which seldom fail to return by

severe frost, or by being excessively wet ; and, I might add, an idea that I myself am growing into years, and may, if I live, before I come to his age, be unable to attend every appointment. On Whit-Tuesday this year, I held a love-feast at Hawkshaw-lane ; and a few Sundays before the Conference, I held another at Dixon Green ; these were among the best times I ever enjoyed of that sort. At both these seasons nearly the whole of the people spoke ; at the latter place, as many as sixty-eight persons. After the latter of these love-feasts, I heard of several persons who were set at liberty the following week, principally owing to what they felt at that meeting. Indeed love-feasts, if carried on properly, are the best helps to conversion work in the world ; but to conduct them to advantage, great simplicity is requisite, both in the preacher and in the people, without which they will be barren times indeed to all who attend them. At both times I was blest beyond expression.

In the course of this year Mr. Bradburn preached a sermon on the death of Lord Nelson, from that very singular text in the prophet Nahum, chap. iii. 8, *Whose rampart is the sea*. The occasion as well as the text being of a singular nature, I will just give the skeleton or outlines of the sermon.

I. The great advantages of the sea.

1. It is useful for commerce and trade.
2. It affords safe protection and defence.
3. Under Providence it is our great bulwark.

II. The origin of property and war.

1. Private property began by enclosing little spots for pasturage and the safety of cattle.
2. It increased with their increasing wants, and also by their increasing families.
3. In this world, war first commenced with Abraham and Lot's servants.

4. War is chiefly founded in ambition, covetousness, and desire of power.

III. Remarks on the present wars.

1. They began with the King of France's death, and also that of his Royal Family.

2. The Corsican's usurpation, his tyrannic, his triumphal, and his bloody career.

3. His inveterate hatred to us Britons, arises from our not acknowledging his titles and power, as Emperor of France and King of Italy.

4. But how very little better are those states who have done all this than we are.

IV. The great advantages of our navy.

1. None is equal to it in the known world. This has been repeatedly acknowledged.

2. At what time, and in what manner Lord Nelson was raised into fame and usefulness.

3. The chief traits in his character were uprightness, integrity, and generosity—his great talents being proved on various occasions.

4. His great intrepidity and magnanimity; these were remarkably manifested in his last engagement.

5. Some remarks on his confession, the fidelity shewed to his wife, and his great dependance on God. He learned both to ask direction and success of the Lord, and never failed to attribute his various successes to Divine Providence.

Use.

1. We ought to thank God that our island is surrounded by the sea.

2 We ought most devoutly to bless God for our present Sovereign, and also for his counsellors.

3. Let us live peaceably under our present mild Government, and give our rulers all reasonable confidence and support.

N. B. By many persons this sermon was highly applauded, and by some few it was thought too monarchical.

At the Leeds Conference, 1806, I was appointed to Congleton Circuit, with Mr. James Fussell. When the Conference ended I made the best of my way to my Circuit, and reached there a few days before my family. My travelling to the Conference, and to my Circuit, with my two boys, one coming from and the other going to Kingswood school, cost me at least 10l. for which I never received one single penny. However,

Thank God, it is a mercy to have a few pence of one's own to help out at the land's end.

In coming to my Circuit I preached at several places, but did not find my mind in such a preaching frame as I had often done. At Leek I called and spent the sabbath-day. On the Saturday evening I attended their band-meeting, which I instituted during my stay amongst them. Here I was completely delivered from every thing that had embarrassed me for most part of the last year. In fact, the Lord so renewed and changed my heart at that meeting, that I could have died upon the spot. From that time all my spiritual bondage ended, and the next day I had one of the best sabbaths I ever enjoyed.

On Monday evening I arrived at Congleton, and preached that night with considerable freedom. Under that sermon Samuel Fox was stirred up to seek the perfect love of God, and never rested till he found it. Brother Pemberton was blest much in the same way, and both these men have been raised into greater happiness and usefulness from that time.

Since then, the Lord has revived his work greatly, both in Congleton and in several parts of the Circuit. During this year, the Coppenall, Weston, and Chorlton Societies were raised, except a few persons who were joined at Coppenall before the Conference.

Three years before this, Congleton and Nantwich, with a few other places, were made into a Circuit, properly the two ends of Macclesfield and Chester Circuits joined into one, with a chasm betwixt them of about ten miles distance. But this year, we have happily united the two ends, and formed some very lovely societies. During this year also the Nantwich Society greatly increased, from 127 to near 200.

A good work also we had at Congleton this year, which went on very rapidly for several months. During this year, that society was raised from 180 to near 300 members in the town, and very lively times we had. And since the old chapel became far too small for the congregation, it was fully concluded to take it down, and build an entire new one, 16 yards by 18. To make the chapel quite commodious, three old

houses, which stood before the old chapel, were purchased and taken down, which has given the new chapel a very respectable appearance. But to accomplish this great undertaking, and also to get a good dwelling-house for the preachers, was attended with no small difficulty. However, thank God, the whole was surmounted, and the chapel was begun in the month of May; but so many delays have attended the building, that it will not be more than finished by that time twelve months. But, I believe, of this chapel it may justly be said, when finished, that it is one of the lightest, most pleasant, and best-constructed places of worship of any in the Methodist Connexion.

This year, thank God, was a blessed year of prosperity in the work of conversion, and many happy witnesses were raised up, both of justification and sanctification, in different parts of the Circuit. Indeed, I had such a blessed change in my own mind, and the people prospered so much beyond what they had done in my last Circuit the year before, that my heart was so grateful to God, I could absolutely have kissed the ground I walked upon.—Glory be to the name of the Lord! At the conclusion of this year, in numbering up the people, I found a clear increase of 300 members. Was not this a most glorious sweep out of the devil's kingdom? This year we gave up three places to the Macclesfield Circuit, viz. Lynda-side, Peover, and Siddington, in which Societies were 70 members, principally that we might have time to embrace new openings in our own Circuit. I do suppose, since the first introduction of Methodism into Cheshire, nothing was ever equal to what has taken place this year; for even in Chester Circuit, especially about Bunbury and that neighbourhood, they have had a blessed ingathering of souls. The last year I had the opportunity of hearing a number of great sermons; but this year I was favoured with the sight of many new converts: Judge ye, which was most desirable and advantageous.

At the Liverpool Conference, 1807, I was appointed a second year for the same Circuit, with Mr. W. Hill. I felt so much afraid of some of our new converts going

back, that I was very desirous of getting a preacher along with me, that would help to keep up the people's attention, which I am happy to say has been the case, so that, under God, we have been so far from losing upon the whole, that we have gained near 200 more. During the Conference time, a good work broke out at Sandbach, which Mr. Fussell sent me an account of to Liverpool, and which he was no small instrument in bringing about. This news greatly gladdened my heart. Sandbach is a place where the preachers have gone to for a long time, without seeing much fruit of their labours, as they could never raise the Society to much more than about twenty members. The last year we got them up to twenty-eight. However, blessed be the Lord, the work of God has gone on there in such a manner, that at the giving of the tickets in September last, I added thirty new members to the old stock. The work has been going on in a gradual way all the year, and this quarter we have got a complete hundred in that Society. Indeed, in this revival at Sandbach, we have joined several very respectable people, who now talk very largely of a new chapel, and mean to subscribe handsomely towards it. At a place called Buerton and Audlem this year, a good work has also broke out, which our Nantwich friends most gladly embraced. Audlem was in the Chester Circuit many years ago, but on some account it was given up; but this year there is such a general spirit of hearing, that when I came to form them into a class, near fifty joined the first night; since then they are increased to between fifty and sixty. It really brought to my mind that text, *a whole nation shall be born in a day!* Here we can only go once in six weeks, which night we have begged from Faddiley till the Conference. Here they have already opened a subscription for a new chapel, got ground to build on, and the writings made, and I assisted to mark out the ground, which is twelve yards by ten, the last time I was there. They mean to build it without gallery at present, to have one single row of pews round the chapel, raised six or eight inches above the floor; the rest will all be

free forms for the poor. These sixteen pews will hold about eighty persons, and only letting each single sitting at 4s. for the year, this will more than cover the interest of 200l. and supposing the chapel to cost 300l. and only 100l. subscribed, yet since all the seats are sure to be let as soon as they are ready, they are still on a good bottom; there is no risk to run. Besides, we expect, that not only the pews will be let, but that even a gallery will be wanted soon after the chapel is finished, which, if wanted, cannot be built with any risk. At this place also a very singular occurrence took place since my last visit to them, which was as follows: Some wicked fellows hired a man to take a quantity of nastiness, and spread on the gates and stiles during the preaching time, in order to spoil the people's clothes in going from the sermon. The poor fellow got his vessel to take it in, and went to the place, and behold! while in the very act, the whole place fell about his ears, and frightened him to that degree, that conscience smote him, and he instantly fell into the deepest distress. The very first class meeting after this he went to without any invitation, and when the leader spoke to him, to his great surprise he found him under deep conviction, trembling, and quaking for fear of damnation! They prayed for him, and he was soon delivered, and brought to enjoy the pardoning love of God, and is now one of their most lively members. Is not this a *brand plucked from the fire*.

We have likewise had a good work broke out at Borsley Works. It began one night after I had done preaching. I told the congregation after the sermon, in my opinion, after all our preaching, if no conversion work was produced amongst them, our labours seemed nearly in vain. I added, as to myself, I felt like Rachel, although in a different way, who said, *Give me children, or, else I die*. I prayed fervently with them, and many seemed to feel very much indeed.

After the service ended, one of the hearers went to Solomon Shaw's, and said to his wife, *do come here directly, for I must speak with you*. After they got out, she said, *Woman, I am in such distress I feel as if I could not live! do pray for me!* Immediately she

began to cry out for mercy, as if in the pangs of the new birth ; and, in ten minutes time, God spoke peace to her soul ! She instantly praised God in such a manner, that sister Shaw was glad to take her into a friend's house, for fear she should raise the whole neighbourhood. She then gave full vent to what she felt, and praised God most nobly, yea, in such a manner, that a sick woman who was in bed up stairs, was so much affected, that she fell into deep distress ! They prayed for her, till God spoke peace to her soul also. After this there was a glorious shout of praise indeed.

In a few weeks afterwards, Mr. Hill preached there, and after the sermon there was such a general cry for mercy, that they continued the meeting till twelve o'clock, and several that night found peace with God. At the giving of the tickets, seventeen persons applied for notes of admittance to meet in class, and since then we have added above 20 more ; and so gloriously does the work of God go on in that place, that we hope the whole neighbourhood will soon be brought to God. That Society is now raised from twelve to above fifty.

At Nantwich the Society has been some time in a blessed state, nor was I ever amongst a more lively people, having a goodly number of faithful praying men and women. The love-feasts I have held there, have been equal to any I ever attended in any part of our connexion ; and I do think, more freedom, power, and simplicity, scarcely ever existed amongst any people. In this Society a goodly number enjoy the perfect love of God, and it keeps up a warmth within, and a keen edge without, for the good of others, that nothing else can ever do. Here, till a very few years ago, the work of God has been at a very low ebb, which the following circumstance will clearly shew : A few years before Parson Greenwood desisted from travelling, he laboured in the Chester Circuit, which then included Nantwich. The first time he came to them he made the following remark in his sermon : " My present congregation is just the same number as

I have been years absent from the Circuit, namely TWENTY-THREE!"

In this place our people have occupied an old Baptist chapel for about 30 years, and never increased much till of late. But now, thank God, the place is too strait for them. Much pains was taken for some time, without effect, to procure some ground to build on, till lately, that a Gentleman's house being to be sold, the friends have plucked up their spirits, and made a purchase of it, which is in a very good situation, and which purchase has cost 700*l*. Here they have already begun to build a new chapel, of the same dimensions as Congleton, and intend it to be no way inferior; which will, no doubt, sufficiently accommodate the whole town for generations to come.

I have now only to add, what yet lies before me I cannot tell; but I am now in my twenty-second year as a travelling preacher. Thank God, I can yet say, I feel as willing to labour for God as ever; and as most of my time and strength has been spent in serving him, whatever he gives me in future shall be returned to him again. The work of God is my delight, and the duties of the Ministry are as much my element as ever. And I do mean, if possible, that my remaining days shall be more useful than my former. I see defects in most things I have done; but, thank God, I have an Advocate with the Father: he is my Prophet, Priest, and King, and to him I commit my *everlasting all*.

I shall just beg leave to mention the little concern I have had with music since I became a Minister—the reasons of my composing and publishing—and my views of introducing the praises of God into public worship.

I have already said, that after my first becoming serious, I was about fourteen years without paying much attention to it, and have often thought it was well I did so; for, during that time, my heart got so established in grace, that ever since I have sat more loose to it than many have imagined.

The first time I paid much attention to it again, was in Nottingham Circuit; then I began to write out a

few things for my own private use, just to refer to when necessary, and, from less to more, I went on till I had collected the volume which I first offered to the public; and my reason for not printing that work, was owing to a printer's giving me a wrong estimate, by which I offered too much for the money. Whether I shall yet publish it, I cannot tell.

All my own compositions have chiefly been the impressions of the moment, occasioned by some peculiar circumstance. My first anthem was occasioned by my wife's affliction, *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble.* My second was to encourage myself under it, *I cried unto the Lord, with my voice did I make my supplication.* My third was composed on her recovery, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name.* The last was to return thanks to God for her recovery, *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, let me never be ashamed.* My *Funeral Ode* was composed on the death of a good young man at Hathorn, in Leicestershire, of the name of John Harriman. "Alas! alas! and is the spirit fled? and is my friend now numbered with the dead?" The *Barren Fig-Tree* was composed upon my being presented with a composition on the same words by a Physician's Lady, Dr. Kirkland's, of Ashby-de-la-Zouch; my not admiring it led me to think I could set a better piece of music to the words myself. The *Fall of Babylon* was occasioned by a friend's presenting me with part of those words; and requesting me to set music to them; the rest I added myself. A Clergyman at Hinckley, in Leicestershire, requested me to set music to *the Evening Service*, that he might have it sung in his church. I obliged him, and sent him a fair copy; he not only ordered it to be sung in his church, but would frequently have the service introduced with *The Barren Fig-Tree.*

In this way have all my compositions been produced, and not, as some have supposed, spending my whole time in it. I never could do any thing in that way, unless some circumstance produced it; for to

sit down and compose at pleasure, is what I never yet could do.

My chief design in publishing was, to give a few short pieces, proper to be sung before the sermon, easy to be learnt, and in which the congregations might readily join: also a few hymn tunes, principally for those measures which we had very few good ones upon. In this my motives were pure, and I have suffered no loss by it.

Two evils, I perceived, were growing among the people, which occasioned it; first, they were introducing many foolish ranting tunes, more fit for a play-house, or an ale-bench, than for solemn worship. Secondly, many anthems and pieces were introduced, in which were many foolish and nonsensical repetitions, no way calculated to produce devotion, or to edify, but chiefly tended to draw away the attention, to consume time, to grieve serious people, and to rob a Minister of that precious time he ought to have in applying his sermon; and thereby making our places of public worship more like a concert-room, or place of amusement, than the house of God. Hence instrumental accompaniments to very long pieces, introduced on various occasions into public worship, in my opinion, is a deviation from primitive spiritual worship, and can rarely be done but to please the auditory. Hence, singing the praises of God in a way that the whole congregation can join in, is certainly the best; and must be most pleasing to the Deity. If a short piece can be introduced occasionally before the sermon till all are completely seated, this seems very proper; but, if even this be continued too long, it does more harm than good. There are Ministers who think, that a sermon has much the best effect, immediately after prayer.

On singing the Praises of God.

1. **BE** sure you do this work *modestly*, for vain singing, however well executed, is painful to good people. Let not yourselves, so much as your subject, appear ; and consider, you are the mouth of the congregation, in offering their petitions or praises to God ; therefore let them see that you offer it to the Lord in the same spirit in which they wish to offer it themselves.

2. Do it with *judgment*, and let those who conduct the singing, if possible, get every thing correct and perfect, which cannot so well be done without some knowledge in notes ; and let this knowledge be obtained in private, without which you must appear to a great disadvantage ; and remember not to deviate from the author to please your own fancy, because that may be indulged at the risk of your character as a judge in that science.

3. Make as little use as possible of *music books* in public worship, because every thing has the best effect on others that seems quite extemporary ; and, in general, you will find it best for yourselves. And not only so, but persons seem always the most inspired, when they do any thing in public from their judgment and memory, rather than from their book. For although it might not be done better, yet it will be better received, and have a better effect on the auditory.

4. Do this work with some *confidence*, viz. with self-possession ; he that appears full of timidity and fear in public, what he does will produce the same effects on others. To this some may object, by saying, this is not within the reach of every one ; I admit every man may not possess judgment and courage sufficient at first, but it may be obtained by practice and custom ; and always remember, some natural courage, joined with a pure conscience, will greatly help in any good cause.

5. Do this with *deliberation*, for hurry of spirits will

prevent any person from doing things well. A *calm mind* is a great help in the executive part of any thing. To attain which, it will require some time and pains; but despair not of coming at it, since pains and perseverance, almost in any thing, will bring about apparent impossibilities.

6. Do this work *willingly* and *cheerfully*, for he that must be dragged to any thing, will never do it with pleasure, and as seldom with profit to others. To have the mind fully intent on any work, requires, that it should be our delight; therefore cheerfully enter on this work, and *do it heartily as unto the Lord*.

7. Do it with heavenly *affections*; let your heart and treasure be in heaven, and then you will feel yourselves properly animated; and that animation will both help your own devotion, and greatly tend to assist and quicken others also.

8. Do it *heartily* and *freely*, as unto the Lord. Let the high praises of God be your chief joy. This renders every work acceptable, when it is done unto the Lord, and not to man. Whatever we do in the spirit of a true sacrifice, will always profit ourselves, and very commonly it will do others some good likewise. Therefore, the praising of God, and the giving glory to his name in a laudatory manner, let it be the grand *subject* and *burthen* of your song.

9. Do it with *melody*, viz. with *grace in your hearts*; and let it evidently appear, that grace both dictates and guides the song. When singing is conducted and executed with grace and melody in the heart, it will then edify, perhaps equal to prayer or preaching. Many have been equally as much affected by singing a hymn as by hearing a sermon.

Lastly. Consider, that singing the praises of God will be our great *employment in heaven*; as such, let us resemble our eternal employ as near as possible while in this world. If the praises of God are to be a great part of our employment in eternity, let us not only get prepared for it by spiritual affections, but let us get into the same spirit of devotion, so as to be true

spiritual worshippers—so shall we be fitted on earth for that glorious and eternal sabbath above.

I have no more to add, only to give some short account of a few of my near relations.

1. My father was always a great reader; hence, Milton, Young, Toplady, and the Book of Martyrs, together with the Bible, were some of his most favourite books. He was, in my opinion, far too fond of Toplady's writings, to avoid Antinomianism; and I frequently thought, those tenets made him less scrupulous than otherwise he might have been. In the former part of his life, his attachment to his musical friends often led him into irregularities, but for some years before his death he was much more circumspect. He often expressed great confidence in his Redeemer, and he frequently seemed much broken down, and appeared to possess much happiness in God. He was most severely afflicted with the gravel for some years, and died of that complaint, about 60 years of age, and, as he said, *casting his all on the atonement of Christ.*

2. George Stanley was a musical companion of mine, and we both set out in the ways of God together. But some time after his conversion to God he fell into a raging fever, and died in a few days. After his death, Mr. Thomas Taylor was desired to preach his funeral sermon, and obtained the dissenting chapel at Holmfirth for him to preach it in. We asked, when he came, if he had any objections to preach there? his reply was, that he had no objection even to preach in a play-house. Under that sermon, which was preached from, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*, a young man, of the name of Joshua Brooke, was awakened, and soon found peace with God. He lived a few years in the love of God, and then finished his course with joy.

3. My oldest sister was the first in the family who was brought to God ; it was principally occasioned by the death of her first child. In this distress she was brought to see there was no true happiness but in Christ ; she sought the Lord in good earnest, and never rested till she was made happy : and now, for more than twenty years, she has been a steady christian, and always kept her confidence in God.

4. Joshua Cuttle, her husband, was converted soon after I went to live with them. He was convinced under Mr. Nathaniel Ward, who was for a few years a travelling preacher, but at that time only a local one, and was a gardener at Bretain Hall, Yorkshire. Brother Joshua was soon brought to God, made very happy, and presently became a preacher : and has remained a steady local preacher for about twenty-five years.

5. John Stanley was the brother of George Stanley, who is mentioned above. He was awakened about the time of his brother's death, and became soon happily converted also. He began to pay his addresses to a sister of mine, but was complained of to Mr. Hampson, who was then in our Circuit, because she was not in the Society. Mr. Hampson preached a sermon from, *Be not unequally yoked*—it had not the desired effect as was intended, for soon after they were married. However, instead of putting him out of the Society as was talked of, they took her in, and she presently obtained a sense of pardoning mercy, and has been a steady member in the Society ever since.

6. During the great revival in Yorkshire, it pleased God to convert my youngest brother, and being, as some say, *born in a warm climate*, he always loved it best. He often indulged himself in praying very loud, and would at times exert himself, I think, very far beyond his strength. He was also a conductor of the singers at our chapel at Holmfirth, and often laid on too freely. His voice and judgment was such, that he would readily cover five hundred voices ; and he was such a masterly hand, and could bring such a strength of tone from the bass-viol, that he could lead on any congregation with great ease. But so it

was, either by one or both these things, (praying or singing) carried too far, he fell into a state of debility and weakness, and after lingering some time, he finished his course, but it seemed in a good hour, having left a testimony of his being gone to his eternal rest. My brother-in-law informed me, that 1200 persons attended his funeral, of his christian and musical friends, to sing him to his grave; and, that my *Funeral Ode*, and several other things, were then sung in a stile very seldom to be heard. Mr. Elliott preached his funeral sermon to a very large congregation.

7. Since his conversion, my mother also has been brought to a saving knowledge of Christ; so that now, there are very few of our family but what are in the way to heaven, and I cannot doubt for the rest—they all believe the truth, and I hope soon to hear of their enjoying it.

Since I left home, Holmfirth and its vicinity is wonderfully altered for the better; great numbers have now found the Lord, where they have a good chapel, and a steady congregation; but my old friend, Jos. Woofinden, who took in the preachers there, (and whose widow and her son take them now) is no more—a more judicious, discerning, steady man, I have scarcely ever met with.

MISCELLANIES.

ELISHA CURSING THE CHILDREN.

1. **I**T evidently appears from Gen. iv. 3—8, and 1 Kings, iii. 7, that the persons termed *little children*, were grown to the age of maturity, and as such were capable of being concerned in riotous proceedings; nay, their coming out of the city implied as much.

2. They came out of Bethel, the chief seat of idolatry; they had strongly imbibed the prejudices of their parents, and were old enough to distinguish between idolatry and the worship of the true God.

3. They probably had heard, if they had not seen, that Elijah was taken up to heaven. The prophets of the true God, who resided in this place, were apprised of this event before it happened, as it must become the chief topic of their conversation.

4. The manner in which Elisha had repassed the river, was undoubtedly spread abroad during his abode at Jericho, and his mission as a prophet was confirmed beyond dispute.

5. These children, or young people, knew him to be a prophet of the true God, and derided him on account of his office; nay, they made a jest of that remarkable event, they shut their eyes against a miracle, which seems to have been wrought to reclaim them.

6. The words, *Go up thou bald-head, go up thou bald-head*, plainly refer to the ascension of Elijah; and if our translators had made use of the word *ascend*, instead of the words *go up*, this allusion would have appeared plainer and stronger.

7. What aggravated their guilt was, that they did not meet with the prophet by accident, but went out with a design to insult him. They likewise went in a body, which shewed that their motive was malice, and their going not casual. From hence it seems probable, that they went not only to deride the prophet, but likewise to prevent his entering the city. They feared he would be as zealous against their idolatries as Elijah had been, and by this insult they intended to free themselves from his remonstrances.

8. Though the prophet could not but be displeased

with the insult, yet no part of the narrative will countenance us in supposing, that the curse he denounced against them was owing to the peevishness of his temper, or to his giving way to sinful anger. Though his rage had been ever so turbulent, it would not have supplied him with power to command these savage creatures to leave the woods at an instant, and to come to a place they did not frequent, as a public road must be supposed to be, in order to destroy these insolent youths.

9. And farther, as his curse would have no effect had it proceeded from a peevish temper, we have no just cause, from his cursing them, to suspect that he was agitated by any furious or malicious passion.

10. The word *curse* in scripture has three different acceptations, as, 1. It signifies to *inflict* a curse; and in this sense God is said to have *cursed* the ground after the fall. 2. It signifies, to *wish* a curse; and in this sense Shimei is said to have cursed David. 3. It signifies to *pronounce* or *foretel* a curse; and in this sense Elisha is said to have cursed the children. The historian expressly asserts, that *he cursed them in the name of the Lord*.

11. *To speak in the name of the Lord*, is to deliver what he commands; *to prophesy in the name of the Lord*, is to foretel what he reveals; and to *curse in the name of the Lord*, is to declare a curse which he is pleased to inflict, and has authorized the prophets to denounce; so that in cursing these supposed *children*, Elisha acted as a minister of the supreme Ruler of the World, and by his order foretold the punishment that was going to be inflicted upon these idolators. His pronouncing this curse was not the cause of their catastrophe, but the certainty of it, and the command of God was the cause of his pronouncing this curse.

Lastly. On the whole it appears, that the persons who mocked Elisha were not young children, but arrived to years of maturity: it appears also, that they did not insult him by chance, but by design; that they went out in crowds on purpose that they might mock him, because he was the prophet of the true God, from whom they had apostatized; and that he did not wish their untimely end from a principle of re-

venge, but only predicted it as a prophet. The punishment itself will appear just, if we consider the time, place, persons, and likewise how well it was adapted to convince the people of the heinousness of their idolatries, and to recover them to that purity of worship which their law was peculiarly intended to preserve.

MOSES ON THE MOUNT.

1. **N**O sooner had Moses reached the summit of the Mount, than the whole was covered with a thick cloud, and the glory of the Lord appeared upon it, like a devouring fire, in the sight of the children of Israel. On the seventh day God called to Moses, upon which he entered the midst of the cloud, and there continued for the space of forty days and forty nights.

2. During this forty days Moses was on the Mount, he received instructions from God in the following things : 1. In what manner the tabernacle should be made, wherein he intended to be worshipped. 2. He described to him the form of the sanctuary, the table of the shew-bread, the altar of frankincense, the altar of burnt-offerings, the court of the tabernacle, the bason to wash in, the ark, the candlestick, and all the other utensils.

3. He gave him the form of the sacerdotal vestments, and taught him how the priests were to be consecrated ; what part of the oblation they were to take, and in what manner the perpetual sacrifice was to be offered.

4. He appointed the two chief men who were to be the builders of the tabernacle, viz. Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, and Ahosiab, of the tribe of Dan. Having done this, and recommended a strict observation of the sabbath, the Almighty gave Moses the two tables of stone, on which were written, with his own hand, (if not by his direction) the ten commandments, which were the sum and substance of their moral law.

MOSES' SECOND TIME ON THE MOUNT.

1. **M**OSES, in displeasure for the people's idolatry, pitched a tent at some distance without the camp, calling it the *tabernacle of the congregation*, intimating that the Lord was so displeased, that he had removed from them. When Moses repaired to this tabernacle, it was surrounded by the cloudy pillar, which had so much assisted the Israelites in their departure from Egypt. This token of divine wrath made the people very attentive to Moses ; hence, when he went out of the camp to the tabernacle, they rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, looking after him till he was got in. And when they saw the cloudy pillar, which they knew was a token of God's presence, they all fell down and worshipped. While Moses was in the tabernacle he was visited by the Almighty, who permitted him, in a very familiar manner, to converse with him, which favour Moses improved to the advantage of the people, endeavouring, with the greatest importunity, to obtain a reconciliation between them and their justly-offended God.

2. A short time after this, the Lord commanded Moses to prepare two new tables of stone, like the former which he had broken, and to come up alone with them in the morning to Mount Sinai, and said, *I will write in those tables the words which were in the first.* Moses strictly obeyed this command, and, early in the morning, repaired to Mount Sinai with the two tables, where, prostrating himself before the Divine Majesty, he, with the greatest fervency, besought him to pardon the sins of the people. The Almighty was pleased to listen to his request, at the same time promising that he would make a covenant with his people on these conditions :

1. That they should keep his commandments.
2. That they should not worship the gods of the Canaanites.

3. That they should make no alliances with the people of that country.

4. That they should have no strange gods ; and,

5. That they should strictly keep the sabbath, the passover, and other festivals ordained by the law.

ON MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK.

1. **H**ITHERTO Moses had paid an *exact* and absolute obedience to all the commands God had enjoined him ; but now (however it happened) he made some deviation from his instructions, and thereby committed the greatest miscarriage of his whole life. He was ordered to speak to the *rock* before the people ; but, instead of doing so, he spoke to the *people*, saying, *Hear now, ye rebels ; must we fetch you water out of this rock ?* In doing this he expressed impatience and heat of spirit ; which were in direct opposition to that humility he had hitherto possessed.

2. This conduct in Moses was highly offensive to God, as appeared from his first striking the rock without its having the least effect. However, on striking it a second time, the water issued from it in great abundance, and not only the people, but likewise the cattle, were plentifully supplied with that necessary article they had so much wanted.

3. Though this was the first time that Moses had made the least deviation from the divine injunctions, yet it pleased the Almighty to make him sensible of his fault, and to inflict a punishment upon him for his disobedience. Considering Aaron also as concerned with him in the transgression, he denounced this sentence against them conjunctively. *Because, said he, ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*

From this unhappy accident the place was called Meribah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *chiding* or *strife*.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MOSAIC LAW.

IT consisted in three parts.

1. Of political and judicial laws.
2. Of moral precepts, such as the Ten Commandments.
3. Of rites and ceremonies, such as circumcision, sacrifices, washings, purifications, the use of garments, and divers rites by the priests in the tabernacle.
4. The Jews were enjoined frequent and various absolutions, or washings with water, which use is to discharge the body from all filth, and keep it clean. This was a representation of purity of mind, or of the heart purged from filth and sin. Ps. li. 2, *Wash me, and I shall be clean*.
5. Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilarated, had the signification of honour, joy, holiness, and inspiration, Ps. xlv. Acts x. 38.
6. The priests officiated in white garments of fine linen, meaning, that ministers should be *clothed*, or have their minds adorned *with righteousness*, Exod. xxxix. 27.
7. Burning of incense, whose smoke riseth up with a pleasant scent, was a representation of acceptable prayer, Lev. i. 10. Ps. cxli. 2.
8. Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate affections and inclinations, Lev. xxvi. 41. Rom. ii. 29.
9. The sprinkling of blood, and of the water of separation, Num. xix. 13, 19, had a moral signification, see Heb. xii. 13, 14; as had also the muzzling of the

ox, Deut. xxv. 4, compared with 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

10. The affair of sacrifice, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, was a type of the great Redeemer, and will be best explained by a careful attention to the life, sufferings, and death of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ.

LAW AND GOSPEL.

1. **T**HE author of the Law was Moses, a mere man ; but the author of the Gospel was Jesus Christ, both God and man.

2. Moses was the mediator between God and the Israelites ; but Christ, the Son of God, first promulged the Gospel with his own mouth.

3. The Law fixes one God to be believed and worshipped by us ; but the Gospel, one God in essence, and three in person, to be loved and adored.

4. The prophets, at a great distance of time, foretold the birth, life, passion, and ascension of Christ, mission of the Holy Ghost, and the conversion of the Gentiles ; but the Gospel positively and clearly lays down the Prescience, Providence, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Charity, and other attributes of God.

5. The Law is, as it were, the shadow ; but the Gospel is the very substance itself.

6. The Law was a messenger of fear and terror ; but the Gospel, of love and peace ; the one threatened death to transgressors ; the other, rewards to believers.

7. The Law was an introduction to Christ and the Gospel ; but the Gospel is the boundary and end of the Law.

8. The Law was limited to the Jews only ; whereas the Gospel was to be diffused all over the world.

9. The law was imperfect as to its duration, being

only temporary ; because to continue no longer than the coming of the Gospel, at which time it was to cease, Heb. vii. 18, 19.

FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

1. **L**ET governors maintain their authority in their families ; if that be once lost, your authority will be despised and your word of none effect.

2. Let your family know that your authority is of God, who is the God of order, and that in obedience to him they are obliged to obey you.

3. The more God appears in your knowledge and unblamable life, the greater will be your authority in the eyes of your inferiors—sin will make you contemptible and vile.

4. Shew not your natural weakness by violent passions, or by imprudent words or deeds ; for if they think contemptuously of your person, they will despise your words.

5. Lose not your authority by a neglect of using it ; for if you suffer children and servants to say and do what they please, your authority will but be a name. To steer between *lordly rigour* and a *soft subjection*, will best preserve from contempt.

6. Lose not your authority by too much familiarity. If you make your children or servants play-fellows, equals, companions, and suffer them to contradict you, your authority will fall to the ground.

7. Labour for prudence and skilfulness in governing. Masters should be governors, and it is both folly, and a sin, to undertake what you are unfit for.

8. To get sufficient skill to govern well, it is needful to study the Scriptures, and human nature ; for this reason God commanded kings both to read and meditate in the law of the Lord.

9. Understand the different tempers of your children

and servants, and deal with them as they can bear. Some are intelligent, others are dull; some are tender, and others are hardened and impudent.

10. You must put a difference between their different faults, and accordingly suit your reprehensions. Those must be most severely rebuked that are the most wilful, and most faulty in matters of greatest weight.

11. To be a good husband, father, and governor, let love have dominion in your government, that your inferiors may easily find, that it is their interest to obey you.

12. If you would be skilful in governing others, learn first exactly to command yourselves. You cannot expect to have others more at your command than you have yourselves.

13. You must be holy persons if you would be holy governors of your families: Men's actions follow the bent of their dispositions—they will do as they are.

14. Let your own souls be entirely in subjection to God, and more accurately obey his laws, than you expect any inferior should obey your commands.

15. Be sure to lay up your treasure in heaven, and let God be the ultimate end, both of your family affairs, and all things else with which you are intrusted.

16. Maintain God's authority in your family more carefully than your own; your own is but for his. More sharply rebuke those that wrong God than you.

17. Let spiritual love predominate; and as such, let your care for the soul be above that of the body. Be not cumbered about many things, so as to forget the one thing needful; but choose both for yourselves and them the better part.

18. As much as possible, let your ordinary work know its own time, that confusion may not shut out the worship of God:—do all in a settled constant order.

MOTIVES TO FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

1. The holy government of families is a considerable part of God's own government of the world, and the contrary is a great part of the devil's work.

2. An ungodly ungoverned family is a powerful means to the damnation of all the members of it; it is the common boat that hurries on to the devouring gulf—he that is in the devil's boat must go where the boatswain pleaseth.

3. A holy well-governed family tendeth, not only to the safety of the members, but also, to the ease and pleasure of their lives.

4. A holy well-governed family tendeth to a holy posterity, and so to propagate the fear of God from generation to generation.

5. A holy well-governed family is the preparative to a holy well-governed church.

6. Well governed families tend to make a happy state and commonwealth; a good education is the first and greatest work to make good magistrates and good subjects, because it tends to make good men.

7. If governors faithfully perform their duties, it would be a great supply as to any defects in the pastor's part, and a singular means to propagate and preserve religion in times of public negligence or persecution.

8. The duties of your families are honourable and exemplary unto others. Holiness and good order have some witness that commendeth them, in the consciences of many that never practised them.

9. Holy and good families are blest with the special presence and favour of God—they are his church where he is worshipped, his houses where he dwelleth.

MOTIVES TO A CAREFUL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

1. Consider how deeply nature itself doth engage you, to the greatest care and diligence for the holy education of your children.

2. God is the Lord and owner of your children ; as such, you must resign them to him, and educate them for him.

3. Consider how great power the education of children hath upon all their following lives.

4. How many and great are your advantages above all others, for your children's good.

5. How great a comfort it would be to you, to have your children such as you may confidently hope are the children of God, being brought to know, love, and serve him, through your endeavours in a pious education of them.

6. Remember that your children's original sin and misery is by you ; and therefore, in justice, you that have undone them, are bound to do your best to save them.

7. Consider the great need they have of the utmost help you can afford them.

DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

1. The first duty of husbands is to love their wives (and wives their husbands) with a true conjugal love.

2. Directions for maintaining conjugal affections are these :—1. Choose one that is amiable. 2. Marry not without love. 3. Be not hasty, but know their infirmities. 4. Justice commandeth love. 5. Women have strong passions. 6. To deny conjugal love is sinful. 7. You are relatively one flesh. 8. Take more notice of the good than the bad. 9. Make not infirmities into real faults. 10. Stir up that most in them which is best.

3. A third duty is cohabitation, viz. a sober and modest conjunction for procreation. Avoid lasciviousness, unseasonableness, and whatever tends to corrupt the mind, making it vain and filthy, and hinders it from holy employment.

4. Abhor both adultery and all that tendeth thereto, viz. any thing unchaste, and that tends to violate the mar-

riage covenant. God required that adultery should be punished with death.

5. Husbands and wives should take delight in each other's company and conversation. This unites them in duty, and keeps them in their troubles, and in doing their work.

6. It is a great duty of husbands and wives to live in quietness and peace, and avoid all occasions of wrath and discord. Why? 1. Will you fall out with yourselves? 2. Your discord will be your pain. 3. Dissensions tend to cool love. 4. Dissension between them disorders all their family, like oxen unequally yoked, that can rid no work for striving with one another.

5. It will exceedingly unfit you for the worship of God.

6. Dissensions will disable you from governing your families.

7. It will expose you to temptation, and injure your character.

To avoid these things,

1. Keep conjugal love in a constant heat and vigour: the balsamic nature of love will heal every wound.

2. Let husbands and wives mortify pride and passion, which cause impatience, and pray for an humble, meek spirit.

3. Remember you are both diseased persons, full of infirmities, and be not so strange as you had never known of it.

4. Agree beforehand, that when one is angry, that the other shall silently bear till the other is come to themselves.

5. Look before you, and remember you must live together till death, and must be the companions of each other's fortunes and lives: Anger is the principle of revenge.

6. As far as you are able avoid all occasions of wrath and falling out about the matters of your families.

7. If you cannot quickly quench your passion, yet at least refrain your tongues; speak not reproachful or provoking words. Hot words increase the fume.

8. Let the sober party speak fair and entreat the other; say, know this should not be betwixt us. Love

must allay it, and it must be repented of. God doth not approve it.

9. Confess your faults one to another, and ask forgiveness of each other, and join in prayer for pardon. This will engage you to forbear the next time.

10. A principal duty is, with special care, skill, and diligence, to help each other in knowledge, and worship, and obedience of God, in order to salvation.

11. It is not rational love to neglect the souls of one another. What! love her and not help her soul!

12. What shall we say of those that not only deny their helps but hinder their holiness and salvation.

13. You live not up to the ends of marriage, nor of humanity, if you are not helpers of each other.

14. If you neglect each other's souls, what enemies you are to each other here and hereafter.

Directions.

1. Be concerned for your soul and the souls of others, and keep a lively sense of everlasting matters you speak of.

2. Take the opportunities which your familiarity affordeth you to speak seriously to each other.

3. When either speaks seriously about holy things, let the other be careful to cherish, and not put an end to the discourse.

4. Watch over the hearts and lives of one another, and labour to discern the state of one another's souls.

5. Do not flatter through foolish love, nor exasperate by a contemptuous kind of reprehension.

6. Keep up conjugal love, and affect not to grow disaffected to the persons of each other.

7. Be not above instruction or reproof, by shewing churlish reflections, or by obstinate unreformedness.

8. As far as you are able, instruct, and quicken, and help one another, and call in far better helps, as the reading of good books and a faithful ministry.

9. Conceal not your faults, nor the state of your souls from one another—you are one flesh, and should have one heart.

10. Avoid contrary opinions in religion; but should any differences of opinion appear, let it be managed

with holiness, humility, love, peace, &c. and not with carnality, pride, uncharitableness, or contention.

11. Be not blindly indulgent to each other's faults, nor yet too censorious of each other's state, lest Satan alienate your affections.

12. If you are married to an infidel, keep up all the conjugal love which is due, for the relation-sake.

13. Join together in frequent and fervent prayer, and help each other by an exemplary life.

14. Be helpful to each other for health of body, viz. in providing wholesome food; and keep each other from what is hurtful, as idleness and gluttony.

15. In sickness be tender and regardful of each other's comfort, and be not sparing of cost or pains to restore them.

16. Be helpful to each other in worldly business and estates; not for worldly ends, or with a worldly mind, but in obedience to God, who will have us labour as well as pray.

17. Be also careful of the lawful honour and good names of one another; divulge not, but conceal, the failings of each other.

18. Be also helpful in the education of children, and in the government of the inferiors of the family. How many come short herein.

19. Their duty is to help each other in works of charity and hospitality: Do good to all.

20. Their last duty is, to be helpers of one another, and to comfort one another; in order to a safe and happy death.

SPECIAL DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

1. The husband must undertake the principal part of the government of the whole family, even of the wife herself.

2. The husband must so unite authority and love, that neither of them may be omitted or concealed, but both be exercised and maintained.

3. Husbands should preserve the authority of their

wives over the children and servants of the family. They should be joint governors.

4. Husbands should preserve the honour and authority of the wife ; if there be infirmities, keep them from the children and servants.

5. The husband should excel the wife in knowledge, and be her teacher in the matters that belong to her salvation. The husband should be the principal teacher in the family.

6. The husband is to be the mouth of the family, in their daily joint prayers to God ; therefore he should be able for this great work.

7. The husband is to be the chief *provider* for the family ordinarily ; as he is most able in body and mind, so he should be the chief disposer of the estate.

8. The husband should be the strongest in family patience, bearing with patience her weaknesses and passion ; not so as to make light of any sin against God. These duties must be done in prudence, conjugal love, due familiarity, confidence, gentleness, openness, not opening what she cannot keep, but be a snare, always keeping their own matters, and reproving should be secret.

SPECIAL DUTIES OF WIVES:

1. Be very loving to your husbands—your natures give you advantage—love feedeth love. This requires for all the troubles your infirmities put them to.

2. Live in a voluntary subjection and obedience to them. Remember God hath appointed them to be your heads and governors. If they be unable to rule, you should not have chosen them.

3. Learn of your husbands, and be not self-conceited, but ask such counsel as your case requireth.

4. Seriously endeavour to amend all those faults which they see in you, and reprove you for. Do not take it ill to be reprov'd, nor swell against it, as if they reprov'd you without occasion.

5. Honour your husbands according to their supe-

riority ; behave not yourselves with contemptuous carriage or speech.

6. Live cheerfully content with your condition, and take heed of an impatient murmuring spirit. It is a continual burthen to have an impatient discontented wife.

7. Strive to subdue your passions, and to speak and do all in meekness and sobriety.

8. Take heed of a proud and a contentious disposition, and maintain an humble peaceable temper.

9. Affect not a vain, costly, or troublesome curiosity, in any thing about you.

10. Be especially careful in the government of your tongue, and let your words be few and well chosen.

11. Be willingly diligent in your proper part, of the care and labour of the family.

12. Dispose not of your husband's estate without his knowledge and consent.

DUTIES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

1. Know and lament the corrupt miserable estate of your children, and thankfully accept offers of a Saviour for yourselves and them.

2. Train them up in exact obedience to yourselves, and break them of their own wills.

3. Make them neither too bold, strange, or fearful, and govern them, not as servants, but children, and convince them that your restraints are for their good.

4. Labour to possess them with the fear of God, and a reverence for the Holy Scriptures ; so that, either duties commanded, or sins forbidden, that they may find divine authority in your commands.

5. Speak before them with honour and respect of ministers and people, and with dispraise and loathing.

6. Let it be your principal care, to make holiness appear to them the most necessary, honourable, gainful, delightful, and amicable state of life.

7. Shew them the baseness of flesh-pleasing sensuality, and of the greater excellency of the pleasures of the mind, consisting in wisdom and doing good.

8. Keep a strict guard upon their appetites, and keep them exactly to the rules of reason in quantity and quality.

9. Let their sports and recreations be such, as may be needful to health and cheerfulness, but not to carry away their minds from better things, viz. from their books and their duties.

10. Use all your wisdom to root out of them the sin of pride, and do not, to please them, make them fine, but command plainness and humility.

11. Speak to them disgracefully of the gallantry, and pomp, and riches of the world, and of the sin of selfishness and covetousness ; diligently watch against it, and all that may tempt them to it.

12. Narrowly watch their tongues, especially against lying, railing, ribbald talk, and taking the name of God in vain.

13. Keep them as much as possible from all ill company, especially of ungodly play-fellows.

14. Let necessary correction be used with discretion, according to these following rules :

1. Let it not be done so seldom as to make them fearless, nor so frequent as to discourage and make them hate the parents.

2. Let it be more for sinning against God, than faults about worldly business.

3. Correct them not in a passion, but stay till reason is calm.

4. Shew them the tenderness of love.

5. Let your own example teach them.

6. Choose such a calling as tends most to save their soul.

7. When marriageable find out for them such as are most suitable.

SPECIAL DUTIES OF CHILDREN.

1. Be sure that you dearly love your parents.

2. Honour them both in your thoughts, speeches, and behaviour.

3. Obey them in all things, which God forbiddeth not.

4. Be content with your parents' provision for, and disposal of you.

5. Humble yourselves, and submit to any labour that your parents shall appoint you to.

6. Be willing to be instructed by them.

7. Submit to their corrections.

8. Let them choose your company.

9. Choose not your own calling, but with their consent.

10. Marry not without your parents' consent.

11. If your parents be in want, relieve them.

12. Imitate your parents in all that is good.

DUTIES OF SERVANTS.

1. Reverence the providence of God in your condition.

2. Take your work as the Lord's, and do all unto him.

3. Be conscionable and faithful in your duty as a servant.

4. Be more careful of your duty, than of their carriage to you.

5. Be faithful in all that is committed to your trust.

6. Honour your master, and respect his service as your place requireth.

7. Murmur not at your work, but make it your delight.

8. Obey your masters in all things, which God forbids not.

9. Reveal not any of the secrets of your master or his family.

10. Grudge not at the meanness of the provisions of the family.

11. Pray for a blessing on your labour, and that of the family.

12. Submit to the teachers and governors of the family.

DUTIES OF MASTERS TOWARDS SERVANTS.

1. As in Christ you are brethren and fellow-servants, as such rule them not tyrannically, but in tenderness and love.

2. Provide them convenient work, and such as they are fit for, which do not wrong their health, or hinder them from the means of salvation.

3. Provide them with such food, lodgings, and wages, as their service deserves, or as you have promised.

4. Suffer not your servants to be too bold with you, as to despise you; nor so diffident, as to be in constant fear of you.

5. Your family is a charge of souls, and you should be a priest and teacher in your own house; therefore keep them to the constant worship of God.

6. Watch over them that offend, and bear not with ungodliness and gross sin in your family.

7. Keep your servants from bad company, and from being temptations to one another, as far as you can.

8. Be an example to them in wisdom and holiness, and all those virtues and duties which you would teach them.

9. Bear with those frailties which their ignorance, or bodily infirmities, makes them liable to against their wills.

10. See that they behave themselves well to their fellow servants.

DUTIES OF CHILDREN AND SERVANTS.

1. Love one another unfeignedly as yourselves.

2. Take heed of using provoking words against each other.

3. Willingly bless one another in your labours.

4. Do not draw one another into sin and misery.

5. Preserve one another from temptation and danger

6. When together, let your speech be edifying.
7. Patiently bear with the failings of one another.

DIRECTIONS FOR HOLY CONFERENCE.

1. Labour for a full lively heart, which feels what you speak of.

2. If your hearts are dull, cold, and barren, be not silent from good, till your hearts are better.

3. Labour to be furnished with understanding in matters which relate to eternal things.

4. Talk not either of controversies or of small matters, which are not to edification.

5. Furnish yourselves before with matter for the most edifying discourse, and never go abroad empty.

6. Take heed of proud self-conceitedness in your conference.

7. Let the wisest, and not the weakest, have most discourse.

8. Let your conversation be suitable to your company.

9. Let it be seasonable, that it may not do harm but good.

10. Speak of holy things with the greatest reverence; if the words be never so good, levity may spoil them.

DIRECTIONS FOR EVERY DAY'S ORDINARY WORK.

1. Proportion your sleep so, that you waste not your morning hours sluggishly in your beds.

2. Let God have your first waking thoughts; thank him for past favours, and cast yourselves upon him.

3. Let not pride and worldly fashion tempt you, so as to be long in dressing in a morning.

4. If persons of quality, employ a child or a servant to read a chapter while you are dressing; and wear such clothing as is soon put on.

5. Let secret prayer go before the duties of the family, and delay it not, but perform it before any other work.

6. Let family worship be performed twice a day at least, at those hours which are freest from interruptions.

7. Let the great end, *holiness to the Lord*, be written upon your hearts in all that you do.

8. Follow the labours of your calling, painfully and diligently ; be not sluggish servants.

9. Watch against corruptions and temptations all the day, but especially against your besetting sins.

10. When alone, improve your time in practical fruitful meditations, especially in heart and heaven work.

11. If you labour with others, have matter, skill, resolution, and zeal, to improve the time profitably.

12. Highly value time, and take care to lose none ; if recreations, idle talk, &c. rob you of any time, strengthen your resolutions against them.

13. Eat and drink with temperance and thankfulness ; for health, and not for unprofitable pleasure.

14. If any temptation prevail against you, presently lament it, both to God and man.

15. Every day have a special regard to your several duties, whether as husbands, wives, parents, children, masters or servants, pastors, people, magistrates, or subjects.

16. In the evening return to the worship of God, in the family and in secret, as in the morning.

17. If one day brings extraordinary hindrances to duty, if possible make it up the next day.

18. Before you sleep, review the actions and mercies of the day past, that you may be thankful, or repent, as on examination is found necessary.

19. When you compose yourself to sleep, again commit yourselves to God, through Christ, for protection and safety all the night.

HOW TO HEAR WITH PROFIT.

1. Hear with *understanding*.

2. Remember what you hear.

3. So hear that you may be duly *affected*.

4. So hear that you may *practise*.

How?

1. Meditate on what you hear.

2. Live under the clearest convincing teaching.

3. Come not to hear with a careless heart.

4. Let not drowsiness nor inattention hinder your attention.

5. Mark the principal design, drift, and doctrine of the sermon.

6. Mark those things most that are the most weighty.

7. Pray earnestly for wisdom and illumination.

8. Conscientiously practise what you know.

HOW TO REMEMBER WHAT YOU HEAR.

1. Understand the matter well you would remember.

2. Deep awakened affections will greatly help the memory.

3. Method is a very great help to the memory.

4. Numbers are a great help to the memory.

5. Names and signal words greatly help the memory.

6. Call over, while hearing, the names or heads which have been spoken.

7. Grasp not at more than you can retain ; this will lose all.

8. Writing makes it easy to remember.

9. Often peruse what you remember.

10. If you remember not the words, remember the drift.

RESOLUTIONS AND AFFECTIONS.

1. Live under a heart-searching ministry.

2. Consider that ministers are Christ's messengers.

3. Herein God is instructing, warning, and treating with you.

4. You have but a little time to hear it in.
5. All these days and sermons must be reviewed.
6. Apply the word always as you hear it.
7. Call over in private all you have heard.
8. Pray it all over with the Lord.
9. Go to Christ by faith for the quickening Spirit.
10. Make conscience of teaching and provoking others.

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

ST. Luke gives us, in the Acts of the Apostles, a sketch of primitive Christianity; and shews us how they lived in communion one with another. He says, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul, and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they continued daily, with one accord, in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people; and (while they continued in that Spirit) the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts ii. 42.

THE THORN IN THE FLESH.

1. **W**HEN St. Paul speaks of his *thorn in the flesh*, &c. he calls them his *trials*, his *infirmities*, and explains himself in the following words : “ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in persecutions, &c. for Christ’s sake ; for when I am weak, then am I strong : Christ’s strength is made perfect in my weakness.” These infirmities, in which St. Paul gloried and took pleasure, were such as had been given him to keep him humble, after his great revelations.

2. By the *thorn in the flesh*, and by the *messenger of Satan* that *buffetted* him, may be meant, his bodily *infirmities*, his great *weakness*, and the violent *head-ach*, with which Tertullian and St. Chrysostom inform us the Apostle was afflicted. That same God, who said to Satan concerning Job, “ Behold he is in thine hand to touch his bone, and his flesh, but save his life :” Yea, the same God, who permitted the adversary to *bind a daughter of Abraham with a spirit of* (bodily) *infirmity for eighteen years*, permitted Satan to afflict Paul’s body with preternatural weakness, which made his appearance and delivery contemptible in the eyes of his adversaries.

3. To the same *thorn in the flesh*, or the *messenger of Satan buffetting* him, St. Paul might allude, when he describes those emissaries of the devil, by saying, “ Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 13. But if the *thorn in the flesh* is all one with the *buffetting messenger of Satan*, it is plain St. Paul’s meaning was evidently this : “ God, who suffered the Canaanites to be scourges in the sides of the Israelites, and thorns in their eyes, Josh. xxiii. 13, has suffered Satan to bruise my heel, while I bruise his head ; and

that adversary afflicts me thus, by his thorns and pricking briers, viz. by false apostles, who buffeted me through malicious misrepresentations, which render me vile in your eyes."

4. As to other private christians, it is very probable, the *thorn in the flesh* may signify, all the toils, infirmities, and pains of our weary, decaying, mortal bodies—all the troubles, disappointments, and sorrows which arise as naturally out of our present circumstances, as sparks do out of the fire—a share of the dreadful temptations which harassed Christ in the wilderness—and frequent tastes of the bitter cup, which made him sweat blood in the garden, and cry out on Calvary! To which St. Paul alludes, when he says, "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh," Col. i 24; and we read of some, "who were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword;" and of others, "who wandered about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; yea, they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

5. It is granted, that all true believers have not those *thorns in the flesh*, and may not feel those spurs which made Elijah flee for his life before incensed Jezebel, and request that he might die under the juniper tree. But at the best of times, they have, or should have, David's affliction, "My eyes run down with water, because men keep not thy law." They have, or should have, Jeremiah's grief, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the desolation of Jerusalem, or for the slain of the daughter of my people!" They have, or should have, the sorrow of just Lot, who was "vexed from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked" among whom he dwelt. Therefore, in this vale of tears, we must strive against sin, even unto blood, if we are called to secure the crown of martyrdom; for even, at best, it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.

EVANGELICAL WORTHINESS.

1. **T**HIS is not derived so much from the intrinsic worth of our duties, as our graces, and from the gracious acceptance of God ; see St. Luke xx. 35, *That ye may be accounted worthy to obtain that world.* The truth of these three words, *worthy, just, and to deserve,* ought seldom to be construed according to the rigour of the law, but according to the acceptance of a *merciful Judge*, viz. not according to *debt*, or the inherent dignity of our devotions, but according to the grace of a bountiful God. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy,* Titus iii. 5. *Every good and perfect gift is from above, from the Father of lights ;* and, therefore, when we have watched and prayed, we may say as David did in another case, *All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.* And if God rewards these poor devotions of ours, he only crowns his own gifts, and not our deserts ; for we can do nothing but what we are assisted to do, and therefore, when we have watched and prayed all our lives, *we are still unprofitable servants, and have done but our duty ;* for what proportion can our watching and praying have to these great rewards ?

2. *To escape danger, and to acquit us before the Son of Man,* is but like a *pepper-corn*, or a *rose at Midsummer*, as to a good farm ; yet he that pays that small chiefry, may challenge his farm, but still, from his landlord's bounty, and not from the value of the rent. And thus our watching and praying shall neither rob *Christ* of the honour of our salvation, nor yet be plucked up by the roots as unprofitable weeds ; for they are true gold, though mixed with some dross, and levelled at, though they do not always hit the right mark. And there is a certain reward, in *justice*, due to them ; for from *henceforth*, saith St. Paul, *is laid*

up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day : As due unto them, as wages to a servant ; call the labourers and give them their hire. And this is also due unto them according to the proportion of their endeavours, viz. the more or less our watching and prayers are, the more or less shall be our reward—for he that soweth plentifully shall reap plentifully, and he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly.

3. Behold, saith Christ, *I come quickly, and bring my reward with me, and I give to every man according to his works*, Rev. xxii. But withal we must understand, that this reward is of grace, not of works ; and yet there is a difference between the widow with her two mites, and he who wrought but one hour, the latter not deserving as much as he who had borne the heat and burthen of the day ; and this justice is grounded upon the free promise of God, and not upon the inherent worth of the service we perform. *My merits*, says St. Bernard, *is God's mercy, and so long as he is rich in mercy, I am not poor in merits.*

4. To speak properly, our merits are the way to a kingdom, but not the cause of obtaining it. For, as the husbandman, when he has tilled and sown his ground, dares not say, he has deserved a good crop, but expects a blessing from heaven upon his labours, because *he that plants and he that waters is nothing, but God that giveth the increase*. So that the merit and worth of all our watchings and prayers, and all our other duties or devotions, is clearly from the account and estimation of God ; for our consciences assure us, that we deserve damnation, and even our repentance is not sufficient to make satisfaction, but his mercy covers all our defects.

MORTALITY.

1. **I**T is recorded of an Eastern Monarch, that he kept an officer in his house, whose employment it was to remind him of his mortality, by calling out every morning, at a stated hour, *Remember, Prince, that thou shalt die!* And the contemplation of the frailness and uncertainty of our present state, appeared of so much importance to *Solon*, of *Athens*, that he left this precept to future ages, *Keep thine eye fixed upon the end of life.*

2. A frequent and attentive prospect of that moment, which must put a period to all our schemes and deprive us of all our acquisitions, is indeed of the utmost efficacy to the just and rational regulation of our lives; nor would ever any thing wicked, or often any thing absurd, be undertaken or prosecuted by him, who should begin every day with a serious reflection, that he is born to die.

3. The disturbers of our happiness in this world, are, our desires, our griefs, and our fears; and to all these, the consideration of mortality is a certain and adequate remedy. *Epictetus* says, "Think on poverty, banishment, and death, and thou wilt then never indulge violent desires, or give up thy heart to mean sentiments." That this maxim is founded on just observation will easily be granted, when we reflect, how that vehement eagerness after the common objects of pursuit is kindled in our minds. We represent to ourselves the pleasure of some future possession, and suffer our thoughts to dwell attentively upon it, till it has wholly engrossed the imagination, and permits us not to conceive any happiness but its attainment, or any misery but its loss; every other satisfaction, which the bounty of Providence has scattered over life, is neglected as inconsiderable, in comparison of the great object which we have placed before us, and is thrown

from us as incumbering our activity, or trampled under foot as standing in our way.

4. Every man has experienced how much of this ardour has been remitted, when a sharp or tedious sickness has set death before his eyes. The extensive influence of greatness, the glitter of wealth, the praises of admirers, and the attendance of supplicants, have appeared vain and empty things, when the last hour seemed approaching; and the same appearance they would always have, if the same thought was always predominant. We should then find the absurdity of stretching out our arms incessantly to grasp that which we cannot keep, and wearing our lives by endeavours to add new turrets to the fabric of ambition, when the foundation itself is shaking, and the ground on which it stands is mouldering away.

5. The known shortness of life, as it ought to moderate our passions, may likewise, with equal propriety, contract our designs. There is not time for the most forcible genius, and most active industry, to extend its effects beyond a certain sphere. To project the conquest of the world, is the madness of mighty Princes; to hope for excellence in every science, has been the folly of literary heroes; and both have found at last, that they have panted for a height of eminence denied to humanity, and have lost many opportunities of making themselves useful and happy, by a vain ambition of obtaining a species of honour, which the eternal laws of Providence have placed beyond the reach of man.

6. The miscarriages of the great designs of princes are recorded in the histories of the world, but are of little use to the bulk of mankind, who seem very little interested in admonitions against errors which they cannot commit. But the fate of learned ambition is a proper subject for every scholar to consider; for who has not had occasion to regret the dissipation of great abilities in a boundless multiplicity of pursuits, to lament the sudden desertion of excellent designs, upon the offer of some other subject made inviting by its novelty, and to observe the inaccuracy of deficiencies

of works left unfinished by too great an extension of the plan.

7. It is always pleasing to observe, how much more our minds conceive than our bodies can perform ; yet it is our duty, while we continue in this complicated state, to regulate one part of our composition by some regard to the other. We are not to indulge our corporeal appetites with pleasure that impair our constitution, or our intellectual vigour, nor gratify our minds with schemes, which we know our lives must fail in attempting to execute.

8. The uncertainty of our duration ought at once to set bounds to our industry ; and when we find ourselves inclined, either to immensity in our schemes, or sluggishness in our endeavours, we may either check, or animate ourselves, by recollecting, with the father of physic, *that art is long, and life is short.*

MEDIOCRITY.

1. **A**MONG many parallels which men of imagination have drawn between the natural and moral state of the world, it has been observed, that happiness as well as virtue, consists in mediocrity ; that to avoid every extreme is necessary, even to him who has no other care than to pass through the present state with ease and safety ; and that the middle path is the road of security, on either side of which are not only the pitfalls of vice, but the precipices of ruin.

2. Thus the maxim of Cleobulus, the Lindian, *Mediocrity is best*, has been long considered as an universal principle, extended through the whole compass of life and nature. The experience of every age seems to have given it new confirmation, and to shew that nothing, however specious or alluring, is pursued with propriety, or enjoyed with safety, beyond certain limits.

3. Even the gifts of nature, which may truly be considered as the most solid and durable of all terrestrial advantages, are found, when they exceed the middle point, to draw the possessor into many calamities, easily avoided by others that have been less bountifully enriched or adorned. We see every day women perish with infamy, by having been too willing to set their beauty to show; and others, though not with equal guilt or misery, yet with very sharp remorse, languishing in decay, neglect, and obscurity, for having rated their youthful charms at too high a price. And indeed, if the opinion of Bacon be deserving of regard, very few sighs would be vented for not possessing eminent and superlative elegance of form; for, says he, "beautiful women are seldom of any great accomplishments, because they, for the most part, study behaviour rather than virtue."

4. Health and vigour, and a happy constitution of the corporeal frame, are of absolute necessity to the enjoyments of the comforts of life, and requisite in yet a greater measure to the accomplishment of any thing illustrious or distinguished; yet even these, if we can judge by their apparent consequences, are sometimes not very beneficial to those on whom they are most liberally bestowed. They that frequent the chambers of the sick, will frequently find the sharpest pains, and most stubborn maladies, among them whom confidence of the force of nature formerly betrayed to negligence and irregularity; and that superfluity of strength, which was at once their boast and their snare, has often, in the path of life, no other effect than that it continues them long in impotence and anguish.

5. The gifts of nature are, however, always blessings in themselves, and to be acknowledged with gratitude to him that gives them, since they are, in their regular effects, productive of happiness, and prove pernicious only, by voluntary corruption or idle negligence. And as there is little danger of pursuing them with too much ardour or anxiety, because no skill or diligence can hope to procure them, the uncertainty of their influence upon our lives is mentioned, not to depreciate

their real value, but to repress the discontent and envy to which the want of them after gives occasion in those who do not enough suspect their own frailty, nor consider how much less is the calamity of not possessing greater powers, than of not using them aright.

COMPETENCY.

1. **T**HE pleasure of a sensual man, requires a good fund of wealth, but the temperate enjoyment of a virtuous man, does not. I grant, that ease and rest are necessary to the sluggish, state to the proud, variety to the intemperate and the wanton, and to all this wealth is necessary, but I deny that sloth or pride, intemperance, niceness or wantonness, is necessary to our happiness : Nay, we may affirm, that a vigorous mind, and an active body, is a much greater pleasure than a sluggish ease ; that an humble contented state, is much more easy than proud grandeur ; that sober and thrifty temperance is a far greater pleasure than variety ; and that the modesty, constancy, and friendship of a virtuous affection, is not only more calm, generous and steady, but a more transporting satisfaction than the fanciful rambles of a wandering lust. Is it possible to believe, that ease is the best nurse of industry ; that state and grandeur are the parents of humility and contentment ; that affluence and daily delicacies are the most effectual instruments of abstinence ; and that variety is the mother of chastity ? If not, then it is apparent how far serviceable wealth is ; for all that lies in its power is to provide for us these temptations : But though a wise and good man wants not wealth, yet he needs a competency.

2. The measure of competency is the necessities of nature, not the extravagancies of fancy ; a little heap, where frugal temperance and humble industry

are the stewards, is a plentiful provision. But wherever wasteful luxury and wanton fancy rule, plenty itself is a mere dearth. Competency then is the provision which the virtuous needs has the support of life, and the instrument of virtue; the modest wish of Jacob was, *Bread to eat, and raiment to put on*. The use and advantage of this, is not to keep us and our children from being exposed to contempt, but to the barbarous pity of rich and great friends. A second use of it is, that it helps to keep the mind erect and free; that it puts us into a capacity of employing our reason and helping the needy, and of enjoying ourselves in our own way; and leaves us not under any temptation to unmanly compliances, and unchristian jealousies and fears: For he whose ambition goes not beyond this, will easily trust Providence, if he believe there be any; or his own industry, if he believe none: How he that separates Providence and industry will thrive in this matter, I know not; but he that joins his own industry with God's blessing, obtained by prayer, can never miss of his aim.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

1. **I**N political or religious matters, men may be permitted to remain silent; but when the great interests of a nation or religion are at stake, it becomes every man to act with firmness and vigour.

2. One advantage to be enjoyed is the liberty of discussing every subject which can fall within the compass of the human mind; but when this is lost, its principles will neither be understood or long retained. Truth being supported only by evidence, we cannot withhold our assent; but where this is wanting, no power can command it.

3. Some may dread controversy; and, where it is indulged in its full extent, a multitude of ridiculous opinions will be obtruded on the public! But any ill

influence they may produce cannot continue long, as they are sure to be opposed with equal ability.

4. Publications, like every thing else are of a mixed nature, where truth is often blunted with falsehood, and important hints suggested in the midst of pernicious matter; nor is there any way of separating the precious from the vile, but by tolerating the whole. Where the right of inquiry is exerted, the human faculties will be upon the advance, but where it is relinquished, the will of necessity will be at a stand, if not declined.

5. The middle ages, were remarkable for two things; the extreme ignorance that prevailed, and an excessive veneration for received opinions; circumstances which having always been united, operate on each other, as cause and effect: In these times, every new opinion was looked upon as dangerous. Yet, so little are the human faculties fitted for restraint, that its utmost vigour could never preclude the most alarming discussions and controversies. Whatever alarm has been taken at the liberty of discussions, it is plain, religion hath been a gainer by it: its abuses have been corrected, and its divine authority settled on a firmer basis than ever.

6. The controul of the public mind over the conduct of ministers, exerted through the medium of the press, has been regarded by the best writers, as the main support of our liberties, while this remains we cannot be enslaved, when it is impaired or diminished, we shall soon cease to be free: wisdom and truth, the offspring of the sky, are immortal; but cunning and deception, the meteors of the earth, after glittering a while, must pass away.

JACOB'S LADDER.

1. **J**ACOB'S Ladder, which he saw in a vision, and which reached from earth to heaven, is a proper image

of the providence of God, whose care extends to all things in heaven and on earth.

2. The angels are represented as ascending and descending on this mysterious ladder, because these ministering spirits are always active in the execution of the wise designs of Providence, and appointed the special guardians of the just : they ascend to receive and descend to execute the commands of God.

3. By the representation of the Divine Majesty, appearing above the ladder, is meant, that though the conduct of Providence is often above the reach of human comprehension, yet the whole is directed by infinite Wisdom and Goodness ; and although in this vale of misery we can see only a few lower steps of the ladder nearest the earth, yet at the top it reacheth unto heaven : and were it possible for us to trace the chain of causes and effects to their source, we should see them gradually ascend higher and higher, till they terminate at length in the Supreme Being, the first and proper cause of all, who presides over, and directs the complicated scheme of Providence from the creation of the world to the consummation of all things.

4. Certainly nothing could have been a more seasonable relief to Jacob, or filled his heart with greater joy, than the pleasing assurance that though he was an exile from his native country, and wandering alone over the solitary wastes, yet he was still in the presence of his Maker, whose powerful arm would constantly protect him from all dangers, and under whose wings he should always be perfectly and absolutely safe.

SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.

1. **A**T what period the Schools of the Prophets were at first instituted, is no where said in Scripture ; but

as the first mention of them was in Samuel's time, we can hardly suppose those before were much superior.

2. It may be presumed, that the sad degeneracy of the priesthood at first occasioned the institution of these places, for the better education of those that were to succeed them in the sacred ministry, whether as prophets or priests.

3. According to the places specified in scripture, 1 Sam. x. 5—10. and xix. 20. 2 Kings, ii. 5. 4. 38. and xxii. 14. They were first erected in the cities of the Levites, which, for the more convenient instruction of the people, were dispersed up and down in the several tribes of Israel.

4. In these places, the prophets had convenient colleges built for their abode; and, living in communities had some one of distinguished note probably by divine election, set over them, to be their head or president. Here it was that they studied the law and learned to expound the several parts of it.

5. Here it was that, by previous exercise, they qualified themselves for the reception of the Spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them.

6. Here it was, that they were instructed in the art of sacred psalmody, or, as called in 1 Chron. xxv. 1—7. in prophesying with harps, psalteries and cymbals: and hence it was that, when any blessings were to be promised, judgments denounced, or extraordinary events predicted, the messengers were generally chosen: So that those Colleges were seminaries of divine knowledge, and nurseries of that race of prophets, which succeed from Samuel to the time of Malachi.

SAMUEL'S CHARACTER.

1. **SAMUEL** the Prophet, was devoted to God from his birth, and worthy to be so! Early dedicated to

the Lord, and hallowed by his influence ! Descended from prophets, himself a greater. The service of God made the early business of his life ; nor was it ever intercepted by any thing but the service of his country.

2. Happy Samuel ! Exalted to supreme power, without ambition ; exerting it without oppression or avarice, and resigning without reluctance, when his God commanded ; retiring with undiminished dignity, or with added honour, from the concurrent and universal testimony of his country to his equity and incorruption ! Oh ! would princes so use their power, or so resign it ! Illustrious in the splendour of a throne, and yet more so in the shade of a cell ; so far from envying his successors to the supreme power, that he pitied and prayed for him ! He had raised him by the divine favour but could not restore him.

3. Samuel was an excellent governor, his whole administration being above vanity, corruption, or any private views. Those who attend to his life may observe, that he was modest without meanness, mild without weakness, firm without obstinacy, and severe without harshness.

4. It were hard to determine which was happiest, his life or his death. He lived to the noblest purposes, the glory of God, and the good of his country ; he died full of years and honours, universally lamented and desired ! He died in the 98th year of his age, twelve of which he governed Israel alone, and eighteen as a judge in conjunction with Saul. Such was Samuel ! and such were, and always will be those, whose beginnings are laid in true religion ; whose duty is their delight, and their God their glory.

MOSES'S CHARACTER.

HE was a profound philosopher. He was a skilful general. He was an eminent prophet. He was a faithful guardian of the people.

DAVID'S GENIUS AND CHARACTER.

1. **W**ITH respect to his Psalms, they breathe the genuine disposition of piety, and are written with a true spirit of poetry ; the sentiments to be found in them are often the most grand and sublime, and which, had they been wrote on any other subjects but those of religion, would have been regarded as proofs of a most excellent genius ; and his admirers would have wondered at the calmness and sedateness of a man who, amidst the multiplicity of his affairs, the variety of the persecutions he suffered, the imminent dangers that surrounded him, and the numerous wars he engaged in, could find any leisure hours, or tranquil dispositions, for the polite and delicate entertainments of poetry and music, David was himself a man of fine genius, and a great part of the glory of his reign, was owing to his discretion in employing the capacities of his people in their spheres. His generals were *lion-like men, as swift as the roes upon the mountains*. He had a Joab over his host ; *Jehoshaphat*, for a recorder. *Sheva* for a scribe, a *Zadock* for a priest ; he found a *Chenaniah* to manage the vocal, and an *Asaph* to guide the instrumental music of the temple ; he could tell his successors that there were workmen with him in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and *all manner of cunning men for every sort of work* : This the Scripture calls executing, judgment and justice among his people. Such are the outlines of a Jewish Prince, whom Christians justly extol *as a man after God's own heart* ; whom God himself called to be over Israel, who faithfully answered the purposes for which God raised him up ; in whose family he established the throne ; with whom he made an everlasting covenant ; and who was the great progenitor of the Messiah himself, who now reigns over all, and shall reign, till all his enemies are under his feet.

WISE SAYINGS,

FROM THE

Ancient Fathers.



IGNATIUS.

THERE is nothing better than the peace of a good conscience. Good and bad men are like true and counterfeit money ; the one seems to be good and is not, the other both seems and is good.

Parents ought to afford three things to their children, viz. correction, instruction, and admonition, both in human arts and God's word—all which preserves them from idleness and folly, gives wisdom, and learns them subjection and obedience to their parents.

Other graces are but parts of the christian armour, as the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, &c. but patience is the panoply, or whole armour, of the man of God. The enemy foils us without it, but we foil him by it.

Grace flowing from the blessed Spirit of God, makes the soul, like a fountain whose water is pure, wholesome, and clear ; yea, grace both beautifies, cleanses, and saves the whole man.

POLYCARP.

It is said of him, that he was a faithful and constant witness of the truth ; and that by his wisdom, zeal, and piety, he recalled many from heresies and errors. It is also said of him, that he was in great esteem through all Asia, being a scholar to the apostles, and that he both saw and conversed with Christ himself ;

hence his authority was of great credit, both with his own church, and with many others.

DIONYSIUS.

He was so devout a man, that before his death he said, "Come life, come death, I will worship none but the God of heaven and earth."

Also, he used to say, two things he desired of God; first, that he might know the truth himself; and secondly, that he might preach it as he ought to others.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

That which the soul is to the body, that are christians in the world; for as the soul is in, but not of the body—so christians are in, but not of the world.

Also, it is best of all not to sin, and next to that, to amend upon the punishment of it. And again, that it is the greatest slavery in the world, to be subject to one's own passions.

IRENEUS.

He compared the heretics and schismatics of his time to *Æsop's* dog; who lost the substance of religion, whilst they gaped too earnestly for the shadow.

He used to say of the vanity of earthly things, what profit is there in the labour which is so short-lived, as that perchance it was not yesterday, neither will it be to-morrow; and such men as labour so much for it are like froth, which, though it be uppermost, yet it is unprofitable.

TERTULLIAN.

If thou shouldst be backward in thoughts of repentance, be forward in thoughts of hell, the burning flames whereof, only the tears of a penitent eye can extinguish. If the devil, without Christ's leave, had no power over the Gadarene's swine, much less have they power over God's own sheep.

We should not try men's faith by their persons, but their persons by their faith.

It is in vain to come to the God of peace, without peace, or to pray for forgiveness, without forgiving

others. We must not come to make an atonement with God at his altar, before we have made atonement with our brother in our heart.

CLEMENS.

Such as adorn themselves with gold, and think themselves bettered thereby, are worse than gold, and not lords of it, as all that have it ought to be.

Out of the bowels of the earth, hath God discovered and shewed gold unto men, and they have made it the occasion of all mischief and wickedness.

Gold to many men is much dearer than their faith and honesty; and the love of it makes many so covetous, as if they were to live for ever. Avarice is not the vice of gold, but of men which use it wickedly.

ORIGEN.

God's providence hath ordained all things for some end and purpose. He made not malice, and though he can restrain it, yet he will not; for, if malice were not, virtue should not have had a contrary; as, the malice of Joseph's brethren, in the end, brought about a great good.

CYPRIAN.

There are twelve absurdities in the life of man:—1. Wisdom without goodness. 2. Youth without obedience. 3. Old age without religion. 4. Riches without alms. 5. Women without modesty. 6. A guide without virtue. 7. Poor and proud. 8. Contentious vanity. 9. Proud things. 10. Negligent Bishops. 11. People without discipline. And, 12. Subjects without laws.

EUSEBIUS.

Moses wrote the old law on dead tables of stone, but Christ writes the New Testament on the living tables of the heart.

BASIL.

To know thyself is very difficult; for as the eye can see all things but itself, so some can discern all faults but their own.

Divine love is a never-failing treasure—he that hath it is rich, and he that wanteth it is poor.

The Bible, he saith, is the physician's shop of preservatives against poisonous heretics—a pattern of profitable laws against rebellious spirits—a treasure of most costly jewels against beggarly elements—and a fountain of most pure water, springing up to eternal life.

GREGORY.

In a great multitude of people of several ages and conditions, they are like an harp with many strings, which it is hard to give every one such a touch in preaching, as may please all, and offend none.

AMBROSE.

When gold is offered, men use not to say, I will come again to-morrow to take it, but are glad of present possession; but salvation being offered, few men haste to embrace it. And again, a clear conscience should not regard slanderous speeches.

THEODORET.

The delights of the soul are, to know her Maker, to consider his works, and to know her own state.

THE NEGRO GIRL.

A TALE.

Written with a View to recommend Charity.

Fleecy locks, and black complexion,
 Cannot alter nature's claim:
 Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same.

LADY Mansell's mother was a woman possessed of uncommon sense and understanding, and of extraordinary piety, as such, she was careful that her daughter should want none of the advantages that education could bestow; and, therefore, was at particular pains to instil into her mind those principles, which alone can afford consolation under the heavy weight of misfortunes, and which can enable the mind to bear with fortitude the calamities of human life, and teach the weary pilgrim, with pious resignation, to submit to the will of Divine Providence.

This excellent Lady lost her mother when she was but sixteen years of age. She was a person whose life was marked with misfortunes; and as her father had never behaved tenderly to her, she had now alone to sustain the whole weight of his unkind treatment. In this state she lived for above two years, the greatest part of which time she spent in solitude. At this period she became acquainted with Captain Mansell, whose disposition and manners seemed mild and amiable. Although an officer in the army, yet before she was aware, his good qualities had so far endeared him to her, as to win her heart. The charms of the lovely Mary had insensibly won his affections also; and he formed an attachment to her which death alone could dissolve. With her consent he made proposals to her father, who readily agreed to the marriage. As her mother had left her a moderate fortune, on her

marriage, she was put in immediate possession of it. This happy pair, for three years, lived in as perfect a state of felicity as this transitory life will admit of, during which time she had one only daughter. At the end of these three years, Captain Mansell received orders to go to his regiment, which was stationed abroad. He had only a few days to prepare for his departure; and in three months after, his wife received the melancholy news of his death, having fallen in the defence of his country. This was a most dreadful stroke to Mrs. Mansell, and called forth all her fortitude; but, though greatly distressed at these heavy tidings, yet she reflected, that her infant daughter had no other earthly protection than herself; therefore she devoted her time to the education and instruction of her child. This lovely girl grew up the admiration and delight of all who knew her: But Oh! how short-lived is all earthly bliss—this accomplished daughter, at the age of eighteen, fell into a consumption, and died in three months. Thus deprived of all earthly blessings, Mrs. Mansell had no felicity in this world, except that which flows from benevolence and charity—and as objects on whom to exercise these virtues are every where to be found, and happy are they who have both the means and the inclination. At this period it was, that Mrs. Mansell purchased a cottage, in a fertile lonely vale, situated on the coast of Devonshire, in the midst of a grove of trees which surround it. This romantic but peaceful retirement was calculated to inspire that pleasing calm and soft tranquillity, which those who mix in the gay and tumultuous scenes of the busy world never experienced. Here her time was chiefly spent alone, but when she went about doing good; and, indeed, the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon her, as she caused the widow's and the orphan's hearts to sing for joy. This seemed to her the only solace to her own misfortunes, in soothing and alleviating the miseries of others. Thus she spent her days in the practice of virtue and charity; and though she sometimes looked with regret to the memory of joys that were past, yet she often ventured in humble hope to look forward to a better state be-

yond the grave, where friends will meet to part no more. This bright prospect was her chief support, with which none can entirely sink under the pressure of affliction. Every day she walked out to seek for objects of compassion and benevolence, and seldom returned without having relieved some miserable creature. One morning, as she was taking her usual ramble, she heard the moans of some person in distress, and she had only to hear the voice of distress, immediately to seek and find, if possible, the means of relieving it. She went accordingly towards the place from whence she fancied these mournful sounds proceeded, and saw indeed an object who seemed, if ever one did, to stand in need of relief and assistance.

That object was a wretched negro girl, who was sitting by the road side in the greatest misery. Her tattered garments but ill concealed her wasted form, and her whole appearance bespoke *variety of wretchedness*. She hastened towards the poor girl, and as she approached her she raised her eyes, but immediately, on perceiving Mrs. Mansell, she cast them down again with a look of terror and aversion. However, she advanced nearer, and took hold of her hand. She said to her, in a tone of kindness, *Unhappy creature! tell me, I entreat you, why I see you in this miserable condition, and why you are so terrified at the sight of me?* The girl shrunk from her touch, and replied, *How can I look on a white christian but with fear? Torn by wicked white people from my father, my mother, and my own country, and put into a great ship, with chains about me, that they might bring me to this place to make me a wretched slave. Cruel white man, who, when poor negro have worked for him all day in hot sun, till he almost dies, at night, beat and whip him. Oh! christian whites, not good people!* Mrs. Mansell then said to her, *I am sorry that so many of my people, who say they are christians, should be cruel and unfeeling; but white people are not bad, there are some of them who will give bread to the poor negro when they are hungry, and clothes when they are naked; who will instruct them if ignorant, and who will do all these things for every body that*

are poor—these only are christians among white people. But if you will go with me, I will take you to my house, where, indeed, I do not possess a great deal, but where I will, with all my heart, give you a share of the little I have, and my blessing along with it. Come then with me, and while I have wherewithal to assist you, you shall never want.

The poor girl once more turned her eyes to Mrs. Mansell, no longer expressing alarm and aversion, but beaming with gratitude and delight. She clasped her hand in transport, and said, *Ah! Why did I say all white people bad? No, no, white christian is good to a poor wretched negro like me. I go with you, and though I much like to go back to my own country, and see my father and mother; yet, if you wish it, I stay with you, I work for you, live for you, and do you good.*

She now went with Mrs. Mansell home, and seemed about eighteen years of age. It was with some difficulty Mrs. Mansell and her charge reached the cottage, the poor girl being weak and fatigued, soon received some cordial from her kind benefactress and revived, and gave an account of the condition in which she was found. The ship she came over in had been wrecked near the coast of Kent, but she knew not whether a single person had been saved but herself. As the ship struck on the rock, she clung to a part of it, from whence she was taken by those wretches who are ever on the watch for such accidents. It was with great difficulty she prevailed on them to have compassion on her, and relieve her from her perilous situation, and, as soon as they reached the shore, they abandoned her. In that forlorn state she wandered about for three days without food, and, because of the colour of her skin and her miserable appearance, she met with little else but insult. Is it then any matter of astonishment, that this poor creature should look with terror and dread on white people, from whom she had received such repeated cruelties. But her sufferings were now at an end, and her kind benevolent friend left her nothing to wish for, only she would sometimes

cast a wishful look towards her parents and her native country.

Mrs. Mansell found the most complete satisfaction she had ever found since her misfortunes, by instructing and forming the mind of this young creature, who received with eager transports the lessons of her teacher; and the gratitude of this young negro was unbounded, and her love for her kind benefactress daily lessened her desire of returning to her native country. Mrs. Mansell often told her, that, if she desired to return to her own country, she would send her back free of every expence; but the poor girl could not prevail with herself to part from her protectress. Her progress in learning was astonishing every day, for she soon got to read the Bible, and believed all the sacred truths therein contained: She believed that there was a Saviour, and trusted in him alone for salvation.

Mrs. Mansell frequently employed this negro on her errands of charity, which were numerous, and Mary was never more transported than when sent to soothe the cares and relieve the distresses of the dependants on Mrs. Mansell's bounty. Three years past in this manner, in which Mary improved in every virtue, and was quite happy in her condition; but, awful to relate, Mrs. Mansell was once more destined to be left a solitary mourner in her little cottage. Poor Mary was seized with the small-pox, which were of the worst kind, and, in spite of all the tenderness, care, and attention of her friend, and the best assistance that could be procured, she was in a few days pronounced past recovery. When she found her end was fast approaching, she took hold of the hand of Mrs. Mansell, who seldom left her bedside, and thus addressed her, *My much beloved and adored benefactress*, had it pleased heaven to grant me a long life, it would not have afforded sufficient time to have expressed the gratitude which I owe to you for the inestimable blessings which I have received through your means. From you I learnt that I was a sinner, and that I possessed an immortal soul, a soul capable of being exalted to eternal bliss, or sunk to everlasting misery; it was

you who pointed out to me the road to eternal happiness, and the means of obtaining it. It was your kindness under God, which first caused the dawn of a christian day to arise on my gloomy and benighted soul. It grieves me to leave my beloved friend; but, I trust, we do not part never to meet again. There is a day when every one shall arise out of their graves, then those who have *fed the hungry, who have clothed the naked, who have visited the sick, and instructed the ignorant*, shall be partakers of eternal felicity. You, my dear benefactress, have done all these, and done them to me, whom you found a poor, starving, naked, dying, ignorant wretch; and O, may everlasting blessings be your reward! Saying these words, Mary closed her eyes, and in a few minutes her soul left its earthly mansion. Mrs. Mansell said, Farewell, thou pure and happy spirit; and laid down the hand which, till the last moment, had clasped her's, saying, *Thou wilt now, I trust, enjoy the reward of thy virtuous and spotless life.*

Thus ended the days of Mary; and Oh, mortals, if you could conceive, for one moment, the raptures which would glow in your bosoms, at beholding a soul which, by your kind care and benevolence, had been instructed in the christian religion, take its flight, its departure for a better world; if you could form an idea of the praises which you would receive beyond the grave, how would you exult in being the happy instrument of a work so divine, as to save a soul from death. Such was the felicity of Mrs. Mansell. She regretted, it is true, the loss of her amiable companion; but her consolation was not derived from this world—she spent the remainder of her days as she had spent her whole life, in performing every charitable duty; and when she died, the tears of love, regret, and gratitude bedewed her grave, and heaven will reward her with an everlasting wreath of glory.

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